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# A SPIRITUAL PILGRIMAGE







The Rev. R. J. Campbell, D.D.

Canon Residentiary and Chancellor of Chichester Cathedral

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# A SPIRITUAL PILGRIMAGE

BY

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## PREFACE

THE occasion of this book is as follows.

In May last at the meetings of the Congregational Union of England and Wales, held in the City Temple, the Rev. Dr. J. D. Jones of Bournemouth made public reference to my ordination in the Church of England, and said he thought some explanation was due from me. The assembly seemed to be of the same opinion. The speaker went on to remark that my secession from Nonconformity had had a disturbing effect upon the minds of some of the younger ministers, as indeed it was somewhat startling that the minister of their leading church should take such a step, involving, as had subsequently been the case, the necessity of being reordained. This was why, without any wish to embarrass me, he thought that some public statement of my reasons for the change of communion was desirable. He concluded in the most courteous and Christian manner by expressing the hope in the name of all present that God's blessing would rest as richly upon my new ministry as upon the old.

This direct appeal from a friend and associate

of many years' standing could not be ignored, especially as in spirit and language it was so wholly free from any taint of sectarian bitterness or resentment at my action. Being made under such circumstances it was practically an appeal from the entire denomination I had left, to say why I had felt compelled to choose this course after so long a period spent in the Non-conformist ministry. Up till that moment I had said nothing in public and very little in private as to the significance of the step. I had asked all and sundry to allow me to maintain this reticence at least for the time being. Our country was at war, and anything more unseemly than a religious dispute at such a time it would be hard to imagine, even if I had been disposed to face the prospect of a dispute, which I was not. I shall never be a party to religious strife again as long as I live if I can possibly avoid it.

Many attempts were made to break down my resolve. From the day I resigned the City Temple to the day of Dr. Jones's speech I had been besieged by callers and correspondents who wished to elicit a statement from me on the subject—some in a generous spirit, others not. Determined efforts had been put forth to force me into making a pronouncement which might have raised the whole Kikuyu issue over again with the question of my reordination for the storm centre. I could not be guilty of such a breach

of good taste as to do this when I had barely crossed the threshold of the Church of England, and had I complied with the demand, it would have rightly prejudiced me in the eyes of those with whom I was henceforth to be identified in Christian fellowship. So I gently but firmly declined to be rushed in the matter.

In addition many of my more immediate friends and followers pressed me to say, as soon as I felt free to do so, what had influenced me most in coming to the decision to seek orders in the Church of England. Few of them were inclined to find fault with it, but all of them wanted to know how I stood with reference to the ecclesiastical and doctrinal questions involved.

After taking a few days to think over Dr. Jones's frank request, I decided to comply with it. Nearly a year has elapsed since I said good-bye to the City Temple, and it is easier to speak out now than it was then without risk of exciting controversy. But in any event I do not feel that it is of much use making a merely formal statement. A formal statement might be provocative. It is best to tell the whole story of my religious life and let it speak for itself, and this is what I have done in these pages. That story is not known; it has not been told before; and to many Nonconformists as well as Churchmen it may in parts be a revelation. After careful thought I have

taken the line of not arguing the various debatable issues treated in the narrative. Most of the arguments on both sides are already outworn, and if I were to plunge into the discussion of them I should only stimulate the irritation and party feeling which it is my principal purpose to allay. I have therefore confined myself to describing step by step the road by which I came to the position I occupy to-day. I may be mistaken, but I think this is better than writing a series of essays on points of doctrine, and is really more informing in the end, though it involves a measure of self-restraint.

A word to critics. This book makes no pretensions and challenges no comparisons. It is a plain and unadorned account, honestly set forth, of one man's spiritual evolution. Nothing material to the end in view has been kept back, but I have not felt it necessary to enter into private and personal details which could add nothing to the elucidation of the subject.

It remains but to add that if anything herein contained hurts anyone's feelings or arouses a sense of injustice in anyone's mind I crave pardon in advance. To cause pain is far indeed from my intention. My earnest desire is to help and not to hinder, to heal and not to wound.

R. J. CAMPBELL.

EDGBASTON,  
*September 1916.*

# A SPIRITUAL PILGRIMAGE

## CHAPTER I

### EARLY YEARS

MY childhood was spent with my maternal grandparents in the north of Ireland, whither I had been taken from London when I was a few months old in the hope of saving my life, a well-founded hope, as it turned out. But I had a great struggle to survive, and should never have done it but for the tender and solicitous care lavished upon me by those in whose charge I was thus placed. My constitution was one of extreme delicacy from the first, and has always remained so, though, thank God, I have not the battles with ill-health now that form such a large part of my early memories; or at least I do not suffer so much pain. As a child I was scarcely ever free from pain of one sort and another, and I think this fact has given me a certain amount of insight into and sympathy with the woes of others, both physical and mental. It is often stated, I hope with some element of justice, that this is a faculty which

has characterised my pulpit ministry throughout its whole course. If so, I have undoubtedly paid a price for it. On several occasions before I was ten years old I was given up by the doctors, and once was actually pronounced dead. My grandmother and my old nurse (a woman named Jean Colvin, whose quaint personality is as fresh to my recollection to-day as it ever was) refused to accept this verdict and worked away at restoring respiration till their efforts were crowned with almost miraculous success, and here I am still. And, strange to say, in spite of all this chronic invalidism, with its not infrequent and dangerous crises, I was remarkably happy. It did not make me at all morbid, nor can I remember dwelling upon it in thought. The recognition of this is a great comfort to me sometimes nowadays when as part of my clerical duty I go to visit sick children in hospital, for I think it quite probable that the pitifulness of their condition is not realised by themselves. Perhaps the happiest period of my life was this period of childhood and early youth, for I was surrounded with love and treated with an unfailing consideration which I took as a matter of course.

On my uncle's not very large estate were a number of cottier tenants whose children were allowed to play with me, and, as I now see, though I did not see it then, were expected to



defer to my wishes and spoil me like the grown-ups. They did not do it, though, or not to any very great extent. These early companions of mine quarrelled with me now and then, borrowed my toys and lent me theirs, got mixed up with all kinds of questions of meum and tuum, took lengthy excursions with me through woods and fields, paid me visits and kept me company when I was laid up, but I cannot recall that they showed me any particular deference or that I expected it except when our elders were about, and then it was very artificial. The only ascendancy I ever possessed over them was that of superior knowledge and a more active imagination. Having plenty of time on my hands, I became an untiring reader, especially in history, and I could always rig up a game in which we individually impersonated famous historical characters and repeated their doughty deeds. My own favourite hero was Sir William Wallace, champion of the liberties of Scotland, a giant in stature as in generalship. There must have been something grotesque in such a puny creature as I was invariably choosing such a part, but I did. The others had to content themselves with being Robert Bruce or the Black Douglas or some one equally eminent or ferocious: I stuck to Wallace. Nobody, so far as I am aware, ever wanted to be Edward I, once I had explained to my own satisfaction and theirs the many

monstrous crimes and misdemeanours of that monarch, "the hammer of the Scottish nation."

It will be observed that our preference was given to the chief personages of Scottish history although we lived in Ireland. Not all English readers may understand the reason for this. It simply was that we were Scottish in origin ourselves. I never heard any dialect but broad Scots during the whole period of my residence in that district. We had a great contempt for England and everything English, which was only excelled by our hatred of Ireland and everything Irish. We did not put it that way, but that is what it came to. We were terribly down on the Papists, the Home Rulers, and everything they represented. We firmly and devoutly believed that outside of our own little corner of Ulster all the rest of Ireland was in a hopelessly benighted condition and more or less seditious. What we thought sedition was is not clear to me, considering that our loyalty to the flag could not be held to be identical with loyalty to England, but only with hostility to Catholic Ireland. It strikes me that that is principally what Ulster loyalty is now. When my play-mates and I were not crudely rehearsing scenes from Scottish or Continental history under my instruction we were reviving the battle of the Boyne, and breathing all sorts of truculent sentiments against the descendants of the followers

of King James as contrasted with those of King William. I do not think, however, that I ever wanted to be King William when these great events were toward. Being a Dutchman, he was not sufficiently attractive, notwithstanding the tremendous reputation he possessed and still possesses among Ulster Protestants. He and King James are the Ormuzd and Ahriman of Ulster polemics; and I was amused to observe, as my train was drawing into Belfast when I paid a summer visit there three years ago, an immense effigy of William chalked on a wall. As I remarked to the friend who was travelling with me, himself an Ulsterman, one might never have been away; thirty years had made no difference. There before us was the protagonist of Irish Protestantism, as always on horseback, in the old familiar pose with hand and sword uplifted, pointing the way across the Boyne water to the discomfiture of James's popish hosts. To hear an Ulster Orangeman talk one would think the battle of the Boyne ranked with that of Waterloo and had far more important results. How queer it seemed to be sitting in that railway carriage a few hours after leaving London, and to be back in a mental atmosphere, and in the presence of facts and symbols, of which the average Londoner had never even heard. Underneath the effigy of the deliverer was scrawled the time-honoured objurgation, "To hell with the

Pope !” Had we been in sentimental mood it might have moved us to tears, because of the tender memories it evoked. As it was I am afraid it only moved us to regret that the spirit of faction and unreasoning prejudice still so evidently prevented the realisation of Irish unity. Sir Edward Carson’s volunteers were marching through the streets. They were to have a grand rally the next day at Coleraine, when that redoubtable leader himself was to speak. It was all very homelike, but more or less like a dream too.

The greatest day in the calendar in my youth was, of course, the 12th of July, the anniversary of the battle aforesaid; and for months beforehand the Orangemen of our neighbourhood would be preparing for it, marching and counter-marching with drums and fifes through all the countryside. They thought about little else as far as one can ascertain. And even in the winter the same set of ideas was kept up—in fact, all the year round. In what they called “the lang fore-suppers,” that is, the winter evenings, the men of all ages would gather in the farm kitchens and talk and talk and talk Orangeism, and tell blood-curdling stories of the evil deeds of the Fenians in the past. I knew every one of those stories; I know them now. And the worst of it is that many of them were true. There is no sadder tale in existence than that of the bitter

and relentless feuds of the two races and faiths into which Ireland is divided. I say the two races and faiths, for somehow the settlers of the English pale farther south have not preserved the same fierce antagonism to the native Irish that is still evinced by the Scottish Presbyterians of the north. And when the 12th of July came, what a glorious time we children had!—and the same might be said of our grave and reverend seniors. I do not know what may be the case now, but I know what was bound to happen then. Scores of thousands of Orangemen marched in procession to an open-air rendezvous where enthusiastic inflammatory speeches were made, bellicose songs sung—everybody knew them—and much strong waters imbibed. The Ulsterman would not thank you for beer, or would not in my young days; his consumption was spirits and plenty of it. The processions were gay with banners and coloured sashes. High officials of the various Lodges even wore orange cloaks and carried a Bible and mallet. What the latter was meant to symbolise I do not know, but it was never omitted when we of the younger generation imitated our elders in the way of fervent demonstrations. That we did not in the least understand what all the fuss was about made no matter: I do not suppose very many, either old or young, troubled their heads greatly about that. If the twelfth ended

without a few casualties or even a street riot or two it was exceptional. One of my most vivid recollections is that of an Orangeman being killed on the roadside by some Fenians in a passing side-car. Being rather the worse for drink, he had been yelling his party war-cries at the top of his voice, and they leaped off the vehicle and bludgeoned him to death, driving off immediately afterwards at full speed. I happened with others to reach the spot just before the breath left his body. It was a ghastly sight, never to be forgotten; and its immediate result, as might be expected, was to infuriate all the already dangerously excited Orangemen, and reprisals quickly followed. Many people were injured, and I believe one or two were slain. A priest had a narrow escape with his life, and his house and church were wrecked. I remember watching with my uncle from the safe altitude of an hotel window the military riding at a quick trot up the street of the neighbouring market town and the crowd fleeing before them. This was not a very unusual occurrence; it was only the kind of thing that was to be looked for on or about the 12th of July.

From this brief description it will be seen that the mental climate in which I spent my early days was utterly different from that of England, so different, in fact, that I am at a loss how best to indicate it clearly. These people were intensely



Conservative both in religion and politics. The family to which I belonged had never been anything but high Tory, and would have had no sympathy whatever with most of the aspirations of English Nonconformists in the political and social sphere, and less than might be supposed in the religious—but I will come to that presently. I have not met with anything in England exactly resembling the kind of patriarchal arrangements with which our household affairs were conducted. We had the same servants from youth to old age. No one ever thought of leaving, unless to go to America or Australia to push his fortunes. No maid “gave notice” when rebuked by my grandmother; it would have been no use, her mother would have sent her straight back. They did not even leave when they got married, but remained about the place (unless they went to reside with their husbands in another township altogether), coming in every now and then to render special service as it might be wanted. And yet there was none of the caste distinction that is so tenacious in England, very little of the same fear of social conventions, and none of the vulgar desire to be considered correct and stylish. That peculiarly English habit of mind was completely absent from the folk with whom I had to do. I have never seen finer men anywhere than the men of that part of the world. Tall, strong, muscular, they

were more like Australians than Britons in physique, but fresh coloured and bright eyed. Alas, I am afraid this robust stock has become greatly depleted within the last twenty years, chiefly through emigration. For reasons into which one need not enter here the rural population of Antrim has considerably diminished during the period in question. Economic influences have been at work there as in England, drawing the young men away from the country to the towns or driving them abroad. I remember many years ago coming across a sentence in the *Spectator*, I think it was, to the effect that if one were to discover a spot anywhere on this planet in which a human steam engine was making things hum generally the chances were that he was an Ulsterman. That is not an unjust reflection, as the records of the English-speaking race abundantly testify. Some of our greatest empire-builders have been Ulstermen, such as Sir George White, the brilliant defender of Ladysmith, and Sir Samuel Wilson, formerly Agent-General for Australia; as a boy the latter was my grandfather's playmate. It seems a pity that the vigorous country life to which I was accustomed as a child should have so largely disappeared, but it has. I have never looked upon what was to me a more melancholy spectacle than that revealed in a drive through the haunts of my youth in 1913. House after



house whose inhabitants I had known well, including the one in which I was brought up, lay in ruins, and an air of silence and desolation brooded over all. It was a great and saddening change. It may not be the same everywhere, but it was the first thing that thrust itself upon my attention in the locality I had known best.

In those days of long ago I must have been a strange, solitary boy. I liked company, but I liked being alone more. My uncle, my mother's brother, indulged me greatly. Being unmarried, he expected to adopt me as his son, though whether my father and mother would ever have agreed to this as a permanency I do not know. At all events his death in America while I was still in my early teens put an end to the idea. He used to buy me all the books I wanted, which is saying a good deal, and in fine summer weather I would fill a satchel with them and another with food, and go off to spend the day by myself in the fields, returning at bedtime. I had a perfect passion for nature in all its moods, and a sort of mystic feeling about it. I never felt less alone than when in communion with the holy presence of which I was conscious everywhere in those habitual retreats. I knew what Wordsworth's nature worship meant long before I knew Wordsworth; it was exactly my own. I used to feel that the whole landscape

was mysteriously alive, and every minutest object in it, every tiny flower and thorn, became to my naive perceptions instinct with heaven. Nor have I ever lost this entirely. It gave me a view of life which I can only call sacramental, and which has remained with me all through my maturer years and helped to put me where I am to-day, in Holy Orders in the Church of England and within her sacramental system. For weeks together I would pursue these solitary wanderings every day, reading, dreaming, wondering, after my own fashion praying. I remember making for myself an oratory in a remote corner of our woods, and carving a rude crucifix for it as well as erecting a rough stone altar. Why I did this I cannot imagine, as I am sure I never saw anything of the kind anywhere else at that time, and never took part in anything approximating to Catholic worship, never went inside a Roman Catholic Church, in fact. Perhaps I may have taken note of Episcopalian sanctuaries, as we had some Episcopalian connections, but it is practically certain that there would be no crucifix there, nor any of the other appurtenances of elaborate ritual and ceremonial.

My earliest recollections of public worship are associated with Cloughwater Presbyterian Church of Ireland meeting-house. It was very awesome to my juvenile intelligence, very decorous and dignified, and withal very plain. The services

were long. To the best of my recollection we went in at eleven and came out at two or thereabouts. Perhaps I am mistaken in this. It may only have seemed as long as that to a small person intent rather upon what was to be seen outside. But I do not remember grumbling at it nor objecting to going; I should as soon have thought of flying. It all seemed to me in the natural order of things, and I felt it to be very solemn and impressive. So it was. Anything more reverent, silent and orderly than the demeanour of the congregation that assembled in that unpretentious four-square building it would be impossible to find; and I shall never forget the shock I received the first time I was present at a Nonconformist service in England and heard the buzz of conversation that went on before the worship began and was resumed immediately it stopped. The atmosphere of north of Ireland Presbyterianism and Episcopalianism had not prepared me for this practice—far otherwise. I think my grandfather was an elder of Cloughwater about this time, but of this I cannot be sure as he died suddenly while I was still very young. But I can quite clearly recollect my uncle acting as precentor and “raising the Psalm.” Whether this was a temporary duty on his part or not I cannot say; he had a very fine voice and some knowledge of music, but I can hardly think of him as

ecclesiastically minded. He was more of a sportsman and social leader, and one of the best and most daring riders I ever saw. One of my greatest delights was to watch him take the fences in our annual steeplechase. He was able to perform feats on horseback that I have never seen ventured before or since.

My grandfather was very different. He was a grave, silent man, simple, devout, and of a gracious, loving nature. I have never known any one whose expression so belied his character, for he always looked somewhat stern, and at times even grim, but I should think he never hurt anyone or anything in his life.<sup>1</sup> He was the gentlest, kindest and most patient of men. No one ever saw him out of temper or heard him raise his voice in rebuking a defaulter in the house or out of it. Nor was his piety of the gloomy sort, notwithstanding the mental environment in which we dwelt. I have read many things about the Scottish Presbyterianism of that period and earlier which remind me vividly of my youth, but I cannot say that I was ever made to feel the sombreness and oppressiveness of the Sabbath which the writers are wont to describe. When I went to see *Bunt* pulls the

<sup>1</sup> There is a story that he once shot a robin, and was so remorseful about it that he never afterwards took a gun into his hands. My uncle had no such scruples and was an excellent shot. His shooting parties were a great delight to me.

*Strings* I found myself back among the good folk of my childhood, but with one exception: Sunday was never a dreary day to me, nor was the practice of religion ever tiresome. My grandfather would not have it so, and my grandmother was of the same mind. True we had the blinds drawn, and nobody ever whistled or sang—unless it were the metrical psalms, for we rarely if ever had a hymn—but I was not wearied with religious exercises nor repressed when I wanted to play. I can see my grandfather's sober smile at this moment at the puzzling questions with which I plied him about the Bible, the Covenants, etc. He did his best to answer them, dear, good man that he was, but I cannot remember any of the answers. I can remember my grandmother's much better, for she was bolder on points of theology and said what she thought freely. When I come to think of the Auld Licht atmosphere in which my grandparents were born and bred I am amazed at the broad, human way, conjoined to a profound spirituality, with which they lived their life and ordered their household in the fear of God. My grandmother was something of a Biblical critic without ever having heard of such a being. I had a great fondness for the Old Testament because of its picturesque stories, and when I told the old lady that I did not think it quite fair of the Almighty to penalise the world so

severely for Adam's transgression she quite agreed, but added that she thought the account must be more or less allegorical, which was good, sound sense and would be still in any assembly of theologians. She had some strong things to say also about the morals of the patriarchs and the unedifying language of certain portions of Scripture. David was a favourite of hers, but she regarded him with a critical eye as, indeed, she did every Old Testament character.

My grandmother was a remarkable woman in every way, and would have been recognised as such in any society. No one could fail to be arrested by her appearance in the first place. She was like "a Roman matron, tall and straight." As I remember her best she carried herself with a dignity which no one ever ventured to disturb. Self-respect and strength of purpose were written in every line of her face, and yet there was no suggestion of self-consciousness in anything she said or did. I here set down my grateful testimony that I owe more to her noble example and untiring devotion than to any one with whom my lot has been cast. She was utterly unselfish, though not exactly what one would call amiable, in which latter respect she was a great contrast to my dear mother, whom I really came to know much later, and who, I rejoice to say, is still living and active in body and mind. The two women were alike in their



devotion to those about them, and in the fact that they never thought of themselves at all in connection with the service they continuously rendered; but my grandmother was of sterner mould than my mother, and not one to brook any crossing of her will when she had once made up her mind as to what ought to be done. I think all who had to do with her stood a little in awe of her—all, that is, except me. There was a saying then, and still is, amongst the members of our family, that I was a privileged person from the first in that establishment, and the recipient of a tenderness not bestowed in the same degree upon any one else. Probably my need was greater, but every one who knew my grandmother will agree with me that, even if I had been well and strong, my opinion of her would have been just the same; it would be impossible to think of her with anything but reverence and gratitude. To all in the neighbourhood she was simply “the mistress”; and I am told that when after my uncle’s death she left the old home to come and reside with my father and mother in England, the most touching farewell she received was from a small, silent crowd which stood bareheaded to see her pass as she was driven away. No one who knew her in her old age could have much idea of what she was in her prime. The loss of her only son completely broke her, and she never

had much hold on life afterwards. The only person she cared much about in England outside of the family circle was the vicar of the rural parish where she dwelt, and she was buried with Anglican rites. It is quite in keeping with her character that she should have retained her interest in public affairs up to the last. She was a vigorous anti-Home Ruler, and I believe the only person in the world whom she sincerely detested was Mr. Gladstone. When she died my mother found a history of Scotland under her pillow.

As I was too delicate to have any regular schooling, and, in fact, never went outside the doors at all in winter, I had to be taught at home, and very well done it was. I had the best instructress that any child could desire, a lady named Andrews, a member of a family as talented as herself, and which has given many sons and daughters to the Church and the scholastic profession. Miss Andrews was a delightful teacher, with ways of her own for stimulating the thirst for knowledge in a small boy. Not that I needed much stimulating. She used to declare that I hunted her down remorselessly with new interrogatories daily without giving her time to read up the last lot. I think this was only a device to lure me on, for I never knew her baffled by any question that issued from my juvenile brain. She used to take me home with



her to see her father, who deserves a chapter to himself. He was a real character, the like of whom is never seen to-day. A genius, a fine scholar, and an exceedingly forceful personality, he kept school in a small town not very far away, and has turned out from that little intellectual factory quite a large number of men who have distinguished themselves in the universities and otherwise in later life. If I am not mistaken, the present Lord Bryce was once through his hands; at any rate that eminent publicist's father was well acquainted with the fine old pedagogue of whom I speak. To see Mr. Andrews teaching school was a sight never to be forgotten, and not easy to describe. He sat perched on a high seat, monarch of all he surveyed, with a very tall, wide-brimmed silk hat slightly cocked over one eye, and usually with a pipe in his mouth also. He had the vision of a hawk. No delinquency ever escaped him, no matter how busy he might be with a class, and he had a most disconcerting way, too, of bringing the offender to justice. He would hurl his cane—which was always kept under his arm ready for use—straight at the law-breaker, who might be foolish enough to imagine that he could do evil surreptitiously and was beyond range if found out, and so unerring was the aim that when the missile reached its object no further discipline was needed as a rule. The

person hit was expected to bring the cane back to the thrower, with dire consequence sometimes !

It was Mr. Andrews who started me in Latin, to the no small amazement of his family, who had never known him do such a thing before. To bother about small boys was scarcely in his line, and to speak quite frankly they were terrified of him. What pleased him was that I was not terrified of him, and that I took a delighted interest in his library. It was he, too, who really set me upon the study of history and literature as distinguished from mere promiscuous reading therein. He made me work at it, and regularly lent me standard authors from his own shelves—a great honour, indeed, which I doubt if Miss Andrews would have dared solicit for herself. Usually he would fix the exact date when the book must be returned, and I verily believe that if I had missed once he would never have lent me another. To be precise I did miss once, but under rather untoward circumstances. I had one of my fearful illnesses, and I am told that in my delirium it was pitiful to hear me begging Mr. Andrews to note that I had brought back his history of Rome, or crying out that I could not find it or that it had been destroyed. I have a certain tenderness for that dour old gentleman as he lives in my memory. He might have been anything he liked but for one weakness, which has told

against the careers of many other gifted men. I need not specify it.

Sunday schooling I had none. I do not even know whether there was such a thing in existence at the time in that locality. But I had to learn the Shorter Catechism, and hated it. The odd result is that I know by heart the two contemporary catechisms, which still divide the allegiance of the religiously brought up youth of this island, the Presbyterian and the Anglican. The former I had to acquire little by little and recite to my grandfather, the latter I learned by having to teach it years afterwards in an Anglican school. But there was this similarity between them, that both laid stress on the Church and the sacraments; and one cannot but regard it as a serious deprivation that so many of the children of the present day are without a proper understanding of either. No other kind of instruction can compensate for the lack. It would be no exaggeration to say that the doctrine of the Church as taught to me in my early days was as "high" as anything I have learned since. And nothing could be more solemn and authoritative than the teaching we received in regard thereto. Admission to the Lord's table was a very serious matter even for communicants of long standing, far more so than in the average English parish church at the present time. It was fenced round by restrictions that would

hardly be considered tolerable in England at all, certainly not by Nonconformists. Those who in the judgment of minister and elders were spiritually in a right condition to participate were given metal "tokens," which they had to produce before being allowed to mingle with the hushed assembly that gathered round the sacred board on the day set apart for communion. Those who are to-day agitating in the Church of England for the restoration of the Lord's own service, as it is rightly called, to the central position in public worship would have been impressed by what took place in our house of prayer on sacrament Sabbath. There was no question in any one's mind as to the priority of that service over all others. It was no addendum, no mere extra tacked on to ordinary worship. It was a great service by itself—the great service, to which all else in the Church's life was subordinate. It was the chief means of grace to which Christ's people could look. We children were allowed, and indeed expected, to be present at it, but only as spectators. The experience was a useful means of preparing us for the supreme privilege which was to be ours by and by, if we were counted worthy, of being initiated into the fellowship of this holy mystery.

Such was the mental environment in which I was reared, and such the principal personalities that had the shaping of my early life. And if

it be true that a child learns more subconsciously than otherwise, my debt to these good people is infinitely greater than is here stated. I lived among them at the age of vivid and lasting impressions, the period when the general set of a character is made for good or ill. Intellectually I was utterly unformed, and my experience of the world was almost nil. But I am convinced that the religious bent supplied to my nature by my forbears, and confirmed and strengthened by my early training in a godly home, has remained substantially unchanged through all my after years, and is much the same to-day as it was in my childhood. Of supernormal spiritual experiences I will not speak, save to say that I have had them, and that they account for some of the so-called pantheism of my pulpit utterances of a much later date. There was an experience behind that way of putting things which is common, I think, to all persons with anything approaching a mystical temperament, and it has its dangers, as will be shown in the proper place. I reverently acknowledge that whatever personal religion I possess is due to no merit of mine; it was born with me, so to speak. It would be absolutely impossible for me not to be religious. I believe I have the *anima naturaliter Christiana*. To be spiritually minded is another matter; there has to be agony and bloody sweat for the acquirement of many of heaven's best

gifts. But at least one may humbly recognise and admit that the religious temperament is not universal, is itself a divine endowment, and carries with it a certain spiritual trusteeship. It is an inchoate vocation which sooner or later becomes explicit, and so it was in my case. One may speculate as to what might have been if early conditions had been different. But it is plain that being what they were they nourished and developed what was an innate disposition. One need not, perhaps, have become a preacher, but it was practically inevitable that one's feet should ever be drawn to the courts of the Lord's house.

## CHAPTER II

### YOUTH AND EARLY MANHOOD

WHEN I was just entering my teens my father intervened to put an end to the idyll of my existence in a north of Ireland country home. He very wisely and firmly insisted that I should come to England for my further and more definite education. He had made several tries in the same direction before, but was always defeated, both by my ill-health and the strong representations of my uncle and grandparents, who wished to keep me with them. Now, however, he got his way, and sorely against my own will I was transplanted to English soil and made an inmate of a household to which up to then I had been practically a stranger. And I felt myself a stranger too. It is seldom a good thing, I should imagine, for a child to be brought up apart from his parents and brothers and sisters. It took me years to get used to them or to feel that I was really one of them; and I may confess that it was not until I actually grew to be a man and had a home of my own that I fully discovered my mother's sweetness and



goodness of heart. This was partly no doubt because I was at home so little even after my return to my father's direct supervision. In all I have been a comparatively short time beneath my father's roof. But it was partly due also to the fact that, as my mother has since admitted, she herself and my father almost felt for a time as if I were an entire newcomer to the family circle and only half their own. Needless to say as time went on this sense of strangeness wore off, and a peculiarly happy fellowship grew up which continues to this day unimpaired. It is not often, one may venture to say, that families are so united in mature life, or that there is such a perfect understanding between its various members as in our case. We are very clannish, to use a colloquialism often on my mother's lips. I have no hesitation in acknowledging that I prefer the company of my brothers at any time to that of other men, though I have close and valued friendships with persons not of our blood.

In view of the special purpose with which this narrative is undertaken there is no need to dwell upon my schooldays. As far as I can judge they set no special mark upon me spiritually, a statement which I note is often made of public schools in general with regard to the young life given into their charge. It seems a pity that, while there is so much discussion and disputation respecting the religious training to



be given to the children of the poorer classes attending the schools which come upon the rates, so little attention should have been directed up to the present to the equally important question of the nature of the religious instruction supposed to be imparted in schools of a superior grade. Ours was a grammar school, and a very good one of its kind. We had clergy among the masters, but I cannot recollect a scintilla of interest being shown in the spiritual welfare of any boy belonging to it. True, we had prayers every morning, the usual modified Prayer Book form; and what was called divinity had a certain place in the examinations; but no attempt was ever made to suggest to us that these things were more than a form; and I am sure that is how the boys felt about the matter. It never entered our heads that our religious exercises had any special importance. I now passed through a pagan period, such as I suppose most boys do. My childhood's experiences sank into the background; I knew better than to talk about them. My associates were healthy-minded young savages, purely secular in speech and aim, and I became something of a savage myself accordingly. The dreamer of dreams sank into a dreamless sleep; only the adventurer and hedonist remained awake, more awake than heretofore. Health continued bad, but I managed to do pretty well in my classes notwithstanding, and finally

became a student teacher with no salary. This led on to other work of the same kind, part of it in elementary schools, which I still think was a mistake; it would have been better to take the headmaster's advice and push straight on for the University. My father's removal from one circuit to another prevented this, as also no doubt his large family and comparatively slender means.

At length I was appointed junior master in a small high school in Cheshire, the headmaster of which was a clergyman and Oxford honourman. This event marked an epoch in my adolescent life, for, as the whole tone of the school was Anglican, and I had to teach the Church catechism and prepare boys for the Oxford and Cambridge local examinations in divinity as in other subjects, it was considered desirable that I should be confirmed and become a communicant in the ordinary way. I did so, without, I am afraid, a really adequate knowledge of how much was involved therein. But I took the step wholeheartedly; it was my own choice. I loved the Church atmosphere and was thoroughly at home in it. I was confirmed in Manchester Cathedral by Bishop Moorhouse, and remained in the communion of the Church of England for the next eight years, the most formative years of my life, as will be seen, for they include my Oxford career. None of my family raised any objection; in fact my eldest brother, who

shortly afterwards came to reside in the neighbourhood, usually attended church with me on Sundays, though he was never confirmed. My two younger brothers, however, subsequently followed me into the Church of England and have adhered to their churchmanship from that day to this. It was not through my influence that they took this course. As they drew towards man's estate they became dissatisfied with Nonconformity, feeling it did not meet their needs, and when they were free to act on their own initiative they left it and identified themselves with Anglicanism, within which all their children have since been brought up. My example may have had a little to do with hastening their decision, but was not the cause of it. The cause lies deeper, and is mainly to be sought in the feeling after historical continuity and of dignity and order in worship which, as I have already hinted, characterised to no small extent the stock from which we came.

Some explanation may be thought necessary as to how my father came to be an English Nonconformist minister, seeing that he too, like my mother's people, was of Ulster Presbyterian origin. It simply was that he refused to subscribe to the Westminster Confession, otherwise he would inevitably have entered the Presbyterian ministry and probably have remained in Ireland all his days. He was then and is now

of liberal tendencies in his thinking, and disliked the dominant Calvinism of his youth. When the time came for him to make choice between a ministry whose doctrinal basis was as thus specified and some other career he finally decided against the former, and after some years of academic experience came over to England and entered the ministry of the United Methodist Church. He did this because, as he very rightly says, this particular body is the freest and most comprehensive in spirit of any evangelical denomination with a closely knit polity. It is not a mere federation of units, but an organised whole. Curiously enough, my paternal grandfather followed almost the same course. He too objected to the Westminster Confession, and ultimately became a Congregational minister and died in that communion. Congregationalism resembles Free Methodism so closely that the two bodies could, I think, easily be combined with advantage to both. As far as organisation goes it is the former that would be the chief gainer. There is very little difference otherwise, and I believe I am not mistaken in expressing the opinion that the United Methodist Church could more easily assimilate itself to Congregationalism than to the Wesleyan Church out of which it sprang. Methodist reunion has been much talked of, but I doubt if it will ever come except through Nonconformist union in general.

To the best of my recollection I only once saw my father's father. He died while still in his prime from the effects of a fall on ice. I am said to resemble him somewhat in appearance, and his portrait certainly suggests it. I am glad to possess his pulpit chair, which was generously sent to me by the church to which he formerly ministered. They went to the trouble of having a brass plate affixed to it with an appropriate inscription. From what the donors told me, it was evident that my grandfather was greatly respected among them, and there are still a few alive who can remember him personally. It is noteworthy that one of the observations smilingly made about him was that he never ceased to be a Presbyterian. A domiciliary visit from him was a serious matter. He had notions of ministerial authority, which he exercised to the full. The children of the households constituting his flock were always put through their paces when he came to see them. He catechised them thoroughly, and as he could not use either the Presbyterian model on which he himself had been reared or its Anglican equivalent which would have seemed to him rank Popery, he practically invented one of his own. The children had to know their Bible, and to the Bible he added a definite and continuous course of instruction in the fundamentals of Christian doctrine. It would be interesting to know what he would have thought

on the vexed modern question of the giving of religious instruction in day schools. I am sure the accepted Nonconformist policy on this subject would not have been his. I hardly think the accepted Nonconformist policy in anything would have met with his entire approval. So far as he touched politics at all he must have been a curious mixture of innate Conservatism with a Liberalism born of slow conviction.

The same with modifications may be said of my father, and his sons sometimes poke a little fun at him on account of it. He calls himself a Liberal, and so he is both in religion and politics, but Ulster will peep out occasionally. At the age of seventy-seven his mind is as active as ever and as keenly interested in public affairs. One thing is quite certain : he has never been a Methodist. He might repudiate this statement, as he loves the denomination to which he belongs, and which, not without warrant, he holds to be the best model for Nonconformity to unite upon. But all the same, both in temperament and general outlook, he is still a staid, sober Presbyterian. No doubt his brother ministers will know what I mean and endorse the remark. I have more than once heard the same thing slyly affirmed of the present Archbishop of Canterbury.

This perhaps is the point at which to say what the principal differences were between the Irish Presbyterianism in which I had been brought up



and the English Nonconformity into which I was imported when my father brought me home. I mean, of course, the differences which impressed me without my being old enough to understand them properly. The first was that the "Church" disappeared, and the "Gospel" took its place. I hope no Nonconformist will feel aggrieved by this statement. In my early days many would have been quite satisfied with it and considered it a credit to Nonconformity rather than a reproach; they would have said that the Gospel came first and the Church a long way second; perhaps most of them would say so still. But while I did not know what this change of emphasis meant I was very conscious of it. I could not but realise that the pulpit was tuned to a different note unless when my father was preaching. Evangelisation was the thing chiefly aimed at, and that of a particular and well-marked type. Personal relationship to Christ constituted the subject-matter of the sermons, being born again, and progressing individually in the spiritual life till the soul attained to complete sanctification. We were constantly exhorted to come to Jesus, to make our peace with God, to forsake the world, and so on—all very good and right in its way, but not what I had been accustomed to hearing. It is no exaggeration to say that the very idea of the Church seemed almost superfluous. Any suggestion of the necessity of being grafted

into Christ's mystical body by baptism or otherwise was wholly absent. To be converted, to be saved, was held up before us as almost the sole objective of the penitent sinner, that is, when penitence could be induced in the sinner at all. It repelled me, though I did not quite know why, and I never got over my repugnance thereto. It was repugnance to that individualistic gospel of salvation more than anything else which led to the utterances on my part which produced the controversy of ten years ago. In that controversy I definitely broke with evangelical Nonconformity. What has happened since, so far as I am concerned, is not a return to that, but to the idea of the Church as the Church, the sphere of sacramental grace, the home of the growing soul, our Lord's visible witness and representative on earth, the society in which He dwells and which His Holy Spirit guides and inspires.

The next difference that struck me most forcibly, directly connected with the foregoing, was the status of the ministry. In the Scotch-Irish environment I have tried briefly to describe, the minister's office was held in great reverence, and not least because he had been solemnly ordained and set apart thereto with the laying-on of hands. He was not as other men. He had been sealed to a vocation not of earth, but of heaven. Christ had chosen and anointed him with a divine charism for the discharge of a



sacred duty, the highest of all kinds of work in this world, that of ministering to His flock in holy things. This had been duly recognised by the minister's brethren of the presbytery. The people had called him to the particular church over which he had been set, but they could not give him his commission : that came from God alone.

Some years ago a gentleman in clerical dress came into my vestry at the City Temple after a Thursday morning service, and began thus : " You do not know me, Mr. Campbell, but I knew some of your people a long time ago, and——." " Yes, I do know you quite well," I interrupted. " Your name is Jackson, and I saw you ordained in the north of Ireland over thirty years ago. I could tell you the names of some of the ministers who took part on that occasion, and I remember nearly every detail of the service." He was much astonished, and I make no doubt has since repeated the conversation as the token of a remarkable performance, but in reality it was nothing of the sort. To begin with, the minister in question was one of those people who change very little in outward appearance from early to late manhood ; and in the next place it would be impossible to forget the associations of an event which had impressed my childish mind with such awe as that ordination. No one could help feeling that it

represented something very holy, the bestowal of a supernatural gift by the hands of the Lord Himself. And that was the thought that ran right through all the relations of the laity with the ministry at that time and place, just as it runs through Scottish Presbyterianism in general.

But English Nonconformity as I was first made acquainted with it, and as I have known it since, has little or none of that. In its opposition to sacerdotalism it is shy of recognising any distinction between minister and layman. In many churches the minister is regarded as no more than a person whom the rest of the members of a certain religious community choose to appoint and pay to do what they themselves have not time to do, namely, look after church affairs and see that they are properly administered. He is to make the church go as they make their businesses go. To this end he must be a good and attractive speaker, but there is nothing sacrosanct about his pulpit gift any more than about theirs for securing success in any other direction. Again I beg Nonconformists not to imagine that I am speaking slightly of them or their institutions. I am simply saying what I know thousands of their own number would acknowledge to be true, and many would think desirable likewise. They would view with suspicion any tendency on the part of the minister to magnify his office or attribute special sig-

nificance to it. As a rule there is no laying-on of hands when he enters upon it—not that the omission matters much, for no Nonconformist would believe in the conveyance of spiritual gifts by a merely mechanical act, or would be at all inclined to admit the value of historical succession in this method of conferring Holy Orders. But the inevitable result is seen in the standing and authority of the minister. If he is a strong man, the possessor of popular gifts, he will be treated with plenty of consideration; but the consideration is not due to his office so much as to his personal qualities. And more and more it is the tendency to make the minister directly responsible for all the detail of the activities of the church he serves. He must attend to everything and do his best to please everybody. What money is wanted he must raise; what special efforts are made for any purpose he must stimulate and organise. I am free to say this, for in both the churches to which I ministered while in Nonconformity I was specially shielded from this kind of thing, and thereby enabled to devote myself mainly to the pulpit. I have not, and never can have, any but the kindest and most grateful memories of the treatment I received from the office-bearers and congregations with which I have been associated in Brighton and London respectively. In writing as above of the status of the ministry

I am speaking for others than myself, and I know that what I say would be confirmed by Nonconformist ministers in general. The tendency to regard the minister as the salaried director of an institution which has to be made as successful as possible is widely recognised as a pernicious one, but is not the reason for it to be sought in the popularly accepted theory of the nature of the ministerial office? It would absolutely astonish many Nonconformists to hear their minister speak of his orders at all. Where is the use of arguing about the validity of Nonconformist orders under such circumstances? The first thing to be done is to convince the laity that orders exist and to show what they mean. Let me not be misunderstood. It need hardly be said that the relation between minister and people in a Nonconformist church is at its best one of peculiar closeness and beauty, full of tenderness and mutual devotion. I know more than one such and do not expect to meet with anything better of the kind in corporate religion on this side of the grave. But wherever it is found it will be observed that reverence for the character of the man in the pulpit and gratitude for the spiritual help afforded by his preaching, or love for the wise and tireless pastor whom they know in the home, is the cause of the feeling on the part of the people and lifts the whole subject to a level on which all that could reasonably be claimed

for the office at its highest is spontaneously recognised as true of the man. Perhaps some would contend that this is all that is needed. That is not so. It depends too much upon what may be termed the accidents of the situation—the right man in the right place, and a congregation wise enough and good enough to know it and value him accordingly. It might be tragically otherwise. What is lacking is in most cases the proper standpoint from which to view the ministry as a whole. Either it is of divine authority or it is nothing; and if it is of divine authority, however that authority be construed, surely the fact ought to be solemnly admitted and definitely marked. The distinction between minister and layman is no imaginary one, and it is a grave evil when it is treated as such. If sacerdotalism is a danger, so is anti-sacerdotalism in some of its developments, and this is one.

But I must not labour the point. All I am concerned to show here is that one of the first things I noticed on coming to England was the difference in the position of the ministry, as I had hitherto been taught to look upon it, from that accorded to it in English Nonconformity. It was a difference second only to that already mentioned.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of course it should not be overlooked that in theory the minister's office is a spiritual one, and the call thereto as sacred as anything ever claimed for Anglican or Roman

A third difference, as obvious as either of the others, was that of the political atmosphere. Ulster was and is a hot-bed of Toryism of a particularly unyielding kind—*sui generis*, in fact. Now I was plunged into the midst of an equally fervid Radicalism. It turned things topsy-turvy for me, and it was a long time before I could adjust my vision to the new perspective. To this day that same difference makes active intercourse between north of Ireland Protestantism and English Nonconformity exceedingly difficult; it cuts across everything. Nonconformity in England is earnestly political, especially in its interdenominational organisations, but its battle-cries are almost the opposite of those of Ulster Orangemen. On every Nonconformist platform for the last twenty years I have been accustomed to hearing Liberal leaders and Liberal measures wildly cheered. Mr. Gladstone was idolised by Nonconformists, High Churchman though he was, and they were his chief supporters. Nonconformity is indeed the backbone of Liberalism, and it would be difficult to over-estimate its influence in the shaping of Liberal programmes

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priesthood. I am only arguing that the fact should be more definitely recognised. Nor does the above apply to English Presbyterianism, of which I know nothing at first hand. Wesleyan ministers might perhaps claim to possess presbyteral succession by laying on of hands, but I have never heard of their doing so.



as long as I have known it. It has been and is the inveterate enemy of caste privilege and petty tyranny in any and every form. Its own history has made it so, and it cannot be too often repeated that free institutions throughout the world owe more to English Nonconformity than we can readily compute. To be just it must be questioned whether this is really due to the genius of the Puritanism from which Nonconformity inherits or to other causes. I think the latter principally. Puritanism was never disposed to be tolerant to what it disapproved, and if it had gained the upper hand in this country permanently it would probably not have developed politically in quite the same direction as modern Nonconformity at large. This is proved, I think, by what Ulster Protestantism has done. In Ulster Presbyterianism enjoys more consideration than either the episcopal Church of Ireland or Roman Catholicism. It has been in a privileged position all along and able to dictate terms. The Roman Catholics have been the under dog and have been made to feel so. English Nonconformists do not reckon with this when recounting their own battles for freedom in the past. It is quite true they have had them to fight, equally true that their struggles have been long and stern and bitter, and that even now social pressure is largely against them. But that is not the story of the race to which I belong; indeed it is almost

the other way round. It was my pious forefathers who did the tyrannising, and their ecclesiastical rivals who did the suffering. Nothing could be more eloquent of the distinction in outlook between the two sets of people to-day. It accounts for nearly everything in which they diverge from each other.

But at the same time let me willingly and gratefully admit here that I believe I owe a great debt to Nonconformity on the political and social side of things, principally after I entered its ministry and became associated with its ideals. I shall always be thankful to have known these from the inside. Had I remained in the north of Ireland, or perhaps even had I gone straight into the Anglican ministry after leaving Oxford, I must have had a different outlook upon political and social problems and a different spirit in meeting them. I make this remark with caution. My friend James Adderley, who has breathed a distinctively Church atmosphere all his life, and been brought up within the pale of social privilege too, has not found these facts to be a hindrance to his understanding of or sympathy with the lot of the poor, rather the contrary. Perhaps my experience would have been the same, but I doubt it. I am far more of a Conservative by temperament than he, and unless I had come under the influence of Nonconformity I do not see how I could have



escaped being more or less of an obscurantist in regard to public questions and social reforms. Who knows, I might have been one of Sir Edward Carson's lieutenants had I developed normally ! He will never know what he has lost. But, to speak quite seriously, I have to confess, as I think many Nonconformists are already aware, that it was no easy process by which I came gradually to adopt their views in such matters. They ran counter to my instincts, or rather to the obstinate prejudices of the preceptors of my youth, who held a revered place in my memory. Does any one ever quite shake off the effects of early training even in things to which his mature judgment is opposed ?

Let me, then, acknowledge the obligation under which I lie in this respect to English Nonconformists. They gave me a truer view of history and of the stern realities of modern life. Whatever of democratic principle there is in me to-day they instilled. If their political fervour erred on the side of individualism, and was slow in recognising the new moral issues created by the struggles of capital and labour, that was almost inevitable. And a similar accusation could be brought against the Established Church and with even greater force, namely that it has been the instrument of social snobbery. If individualism has been more pronounced in Nonconformity, class consciousness has been more developed in the

Establishment. Later on I came to see this in both cases, but the story of how I was brought in touch with the Labour movement of our time will be told in its proper place. As it is, I have anticipated a little.

## CHAPTER III

### THE UNIVERSITY

IN due course I went up to Oxford, though somewhat later than most undergraduates, and entered at Christ Church. To speak quite accurately I went up in the January previous to the Michaelmas term in which I matriculated, and spent the interval in doing tutorial work and acquainting myself with Oxford conditions and personages. I took Responsions in June. As a matter of fact, I had passed pupils through this examination long before submitting to it myself. That seems to have been more or less my lot in life. I have helped men to prepare for Holy Orders who have now been ordained for many a long year and are, strictly speaking, my seniors in the priesthood. The reason of my becoming associated with Christ Church was that I sat for a history scholarship there in the summer term, and although I did not get it, being over the usual age, the Dean very kindly wrote to tell me that if I were prepared to read for honours they would be glad to admit me on the strength of my papers. I went to see him, and forged

another link with fate. No man has done more for me than Dean (afterwards Bishop) Paget, and few, if any, have I ever loved more deeply. He was a spiritual father to me, and the wisest and kindest of friends. Acting on his recommendation, I came into residence at the House, and it has always been a source of satisfaction to me to belong to that proud foundation. If I had my time at Oxford over again it is to Christ Church that I would choose to go. My three years there were very fruitful and have exercised no small influence upon my subsequent development.

I never took a very active part in the life of the College. I had no skill in sport—was never well enough to attempt it—and being then, as always, shy and retiring in disposition, I kept to a comparatively small circle in that body of sportsmen. How in the name of all that is reasonable I ever became a public speaker Heaven only knows, for no man was ever less fitted by temperament for a public career, and this disability has caused me untold agonies in times past. To this day it is with much nervous tension that I ever bring myself to face a fresh assembly, though I can do it far better from a pulpit than in any other way. Through the same drawback I never joined the Union, an omission I have greatly regretted ever since, but as time went on I became a member of

several excellent private clubs or discussion societies, and finally, president of one which went on for about two years and was only dissolved after the founders left Oxford. All those composing it except myself were members of the Union, including, I think, two presidents thereof, and we used to chaff some of the number occasionally about coming to us for the fireworks they intended to let off before the larger audience.

One of the pleasantest things to me to look back upon is the weekly gathering of this last-named society. It was intercollegiate, though members of Christ Church predominated, if I remember rightly. There were about thirty of us altogether, and there was always a good muster on Saturday nights. We usually dined in company, and at this function it was the custom to entertain a specially invited guest who was afterwards expected to discourse to us and be flayed alive by his graceless hearers when he finished. But we were the jolliest set imaginable. There was no bickering or bad temper, and beyond all question the meetings were intellectually stimulating, even if the opinions expressed were rather crude and to be laughed at from the standpoint of the wider experience we have since acquired in the university of the world. I have lost sight of the majority of the men composing that circle. Some are dead; some have gone abroad; but some, I am glad to

say, still remain my attached and valued friends in the Church and out of it. Time produces strange whirligig effects in human life. It would be interesting to trace the record of all those men individually, and see how some have falsified the expectations entertained by their fellows then, and how surprisingly others have shot beyond what was ever prophesied of them. Incidentally it may be remarked that none of them ever thought of me as likely to become a preacher. Academic work seemed to be my destiny, even if ordained.

But this is only incidental to my subject, and must not be dwelt upon further. I daresay our society was no more remarkable than others of its kind in Oxford at the time. There were plenty of them, as there still are. They have always been a feature of university life, and little that is unique could be said about any of them. One thing only I may mention in connection with this one as bearing upon my own future. The late Principal Fairbairn of Mansfield College was our guest on one occasion, and when later the question arose as to whether I ought to accept the invitation which was sent to me to enter the Congregational ministry, he observed very emphatically : " If ever any man had his vocation marked out for him surely you have yours. I saw that plainly enough the night I visited your club at Christ Church.

You will have considerable influence with young men. Recognise that, and stay on in Oxford. Attached to the University in some capacity you could do a much-needed work for the spiritual welfare of undergraduates." I have sometimes felt sorry that I did not take his advice.

It is unnecessary to discuss at length the various Oxford men of mark with whom I was brought into contact during my period of residence. The great Benjamin Jowett of Balliol I only saw once. He died, I think, in 1893. The Oxford of my time was full of good stories about him, many of them, no doubt, imaginary. His was the most conspicuous figure in the University, but did not dominate everything. The tide of living interest, especially in religious matters, was flowing another way. The *Lux Mundi* school had come to the fore, and it is not too much to say that everything fresh and earnest in theological study and spiritual life either centred round it or borrowed vitality from it. This was true even of the circles most opposed to it. Nobody could let it alone; it could not be ignored or neglected in any University set. It provoked endless argument and a good deal of antagonism, but never of the bitter and contemptuous sort that we read of in connection with the Tractarian movement of which it was the lineal successor—with wide differences, of course. It may be questioned whether



Tractarianism ever exercised a greater influence in Oxford than the *Lux Mundi* men. They laid hold of the best youth of the University with enormous results to the quality of their churchmanship. Pusey House, with Charles Gore at its head, was doing an immense work in a quiet way in familiarising successive generations of University men with the Anglo-Catholic standpoint and discipline, and equally so in stimulating an interest in the proper Christian solution of social problems. It is not too much to say that it led the way in the latter, and has gone far to make possible the now general awakening of the Christian consciousness on the subject so far as our own country is concerned. This is not generally recognised, but I am sure it is true. Dr. Gore's personal influence was very great. He was the most talked-of man in Oxford, and large numbers of graduates and undergraduates looked to him as to a master. Earnest evangelicals feared him, as did old-fashioned High Churchmen. They scarcely knew what to make of him. His union of liberal views on Biblical criticism with a definitely Catholic theology were a complete puzzle to many people. His profound erudition, force of character, and well-known preference for the religious life—I mean, of course, in the ecclesiastical sense, for the cloister rather than the world—gave him a tremendous grip upon the choice spirits who



then, as at all times, were looking for and prepared to follow any example that seemed to them to promise emancipation from worldly or trifling views of the present and its opportunities. The Community of the Resurrection had just been founded at Radley, and he was its first superior. The Cowley Fathers, as they are popularly known, had come into existence earlier, but were still new enough to be regarded with suspicion and ridicule as they appeared in the streets in their monastic dress. In their ideals and practice they diverged somewhat from Dr. Gore's immediate followers, but their spirit and purpose were, on the whole, the same. Would it be mis-stating it to say that it was to recall the Church of England and the English nation to a true knowledge of their Catholic inheritance? With wonderful energy and self-sacrifice, as well as consecrated zeal and devotion, they carried on their work. Then, as now, they were a very remarkable body of men, highly gifted and cultured, and beyond all question animated by a profound sense of divine vocation. I saw a good deal of them from first to last, and have ever regarded them with deep respect.

Into this religious atmosphere I was introduced at Christ Church. It was entirely new to me, and at first somewhat bewildering. My previous experience had not prepared me for it. The type of churchmanship to which I had

been accustomed in the few years preceding was of another complexion. It was not evangelical; that would be to mis-describe it. Neither could it deserve to be called Broad Church, unless a certain easy-going all-round tolerance could be so designated, which most Broad Churchmen would repudiate. It was a dignified kind of piety, not at all exacting, and much more intent upon custom and order than upon the fervent practice of one's religion. I had been contented with it. It stood to me for the Church of England as a whole, and it was with a considerable amount of surprise that I now learned that this could no longer be. Like everybody else, I had heard and read a good deal about Tractarianism, but supposed it to be discredited and driven from the field. I now discovered it to be very much otherwise, to be, in fact, the most vigorous element in our University life; or, rather, that development of it represented by the *Lux Mundi* school was now in possession, and apparently claiming to be the norm and standard of what all churchmanship ought to be. Most of my friends belonged to it. The set into which I was drawn consisted very largely of men who were in active sympathy with it and looked to Dr. Gore as their teacher and chief exponent. Dean Paget himself was one of the essayists of *Lux Mundi*, and the one to whom had been allotted the crucial subject of the sacraments. It took

me some little time to get my bearings, but I may confess that from the first *Lux Mundi* churchmanship, if I may be permitted that not very satisfactory expression, cast a spell upon me. Spiritually I owe nearly everything to it in my mature life. Nonconformists will forgive me for saying that no one of their number has ever touched me at all from first to last, and I am not conscious of owing anything of my religious life to Nonconformist influences, unless one is to count Ulster, which, as I have already shown, can hardly be cited in this connection. The two sources of my spiritual life are the Ulster Presbyterianism of my childhood, and the Anglo-Catholicism of my Oxford days. To the latter, humanly speaking, I owe my soul. In evangelical phrase, I was born again within it—and this apart altogether from purely theological considerations. I passed through the greatest spiritual crisis of my career at Oxford, and underwent an awakening then which changed my whole future course. I went up with the idea of taking Holy Orders, it is true, but not with the intention of abandoning academic life thereupon; I expected to continue teaching, but to add a certain amount of clerical work to my professional duties after the fashion of the head master under whom I had been serving. This was all; I never thought of anything more. It was not that I was irreligious, but that I

was spiritually dormant. Practically my whole interest was on the academic side of things, and scarcely at all upon the ecclesiastical. Now all was changed. Religion was put first, and academic pursuits and ambitions relegated to an entirely subordinate place.

It will readily be understood that this did not come to pass without a struggle. For some months, indeed for the greater part of my first year, I was in a state of upheaval and frequent depression. I had to establish a new relationship with God, and readjust my life if I could in accordance with His will, and it was not easily done. It would be hard to say why I entered upon it at all. No one, I think, can ever satisfactorily explain the workings of the Holy Spirit in his own heart and mind. I am conscious of being unable to do it now, nor have I ever attempted it previously. Suffice it to say that soon after coming to Oxford, and for long afterwards, I continued in a peculiarly emotional condition, subject to the strangest alternations of joy and gloom, now exalted, now despondent, but always at grips with eternal reality. I was in great trouble of mind part of the time, for I saw clearly that I had got to find a working faith somehow and did not know how to do it. No one knows better than I the inwardness of the experience so often described to me since by penitents, that of crying to God for light and

apparently receiving no answer. All I knew was that I was determined to find God if He were to be found. Now I know I had never lost Him, but I did not know it then. What I was acquiring was a more definite personal religion accompanied by the consecration of my whole being to the service of my Maker. In a word, I suppose I was being converted, but that is not the word I should have used to describe it, nor was I conscious of any such thing. Neither my previous churchmanship, nor my ephemeral acquaintance with English Nonconformity in my father's home years before, had really anything to do with it. In regard to the deepest things I was comparatively unaffected by both.

As aforesaid, the change in outlook was due to my new acquaintance with Oxford Anglo-Catholicism more than to any other single influence. This attracted me very powerfully on the spiritual side, more than on the intellectual. There was a depth and reality in it I had not found elsewhere since my childhood's days. The men who represented it amongst my daily associates were men in whom the note of holiness was very strongly marked. There was a simplicity and directness about them, an absence of all affectation and unctuousness, a profound humility and reverence in regard to the holy mysteries of the faith, which were to me

irresistibly attractive, especially as they were so generally conjoined to wide culture and human sympathies. I loved the atmosphere of sacramentalism, if I may so put it, and the constant suggestion of the supernatural which it conveyed. I felt the nearness of God and Heaven as never heretofore in my adult years. One of the greatest spiritual helps I received was the privilege of worshipping with the Cowley Fathers in their little chapel, since replaced by an ornate church. I used to go frequently to Compline there, and was always made welcome. Occasionally I was a guest at their Sunday mid-day meal, sitting on the right of Father Page. The saintly Father Congreve was always very sweet to me; and it is a joy to know that he still lives to bless his brethren with the fragrance of his spirit. I thought of making him my Confessor, and approached him with that view; but somehow, I do not remember why, I finally chose one of the clergy of Cowley St. John instead. But Dean Paget, who never officially acted in this capacity or would have been likely to do so as long as I remained in *statu pupillari*, was of more use to me than anybody during this period of uncertainty and mental strain. I was shy of intruding on him, but nothing was ever too much trouble for his gracious, gentle, dignified modes of dealing with my anxious soul. Much that he did for me he never knew. His character



was a benediction to all who got to know him, as his memory still is. I never missed a chance of hearing him preach or deliver a spiritual address, especially when he prepared any of us for Holy Communion. And amongst other things I learned, as all the members of Christ Church did in time, that strength and austerity are not necessarily united, and that lowliness of heart may go along with considerable firmness of hand. That this was the case with the Dean was tested in the years during which he governed Christ Church. He was one of the finest administrators Oxford ever had, both as Dean and Bishop, and yet no one ever saw him either ruffled or assertive in manner or word. For years after I entered the Nonconformist ministry I continued the habit of consulting him when in perplexity. And though through force of circumstances this had to be diminished as time went on, I never completely lost touch with him to the day of his death. I think his was the most sanctified personality I have ever known.

Paradoxical as it may sound, one of the first fruits of the spiritual awakening I underwent was to make me seek out Nonconformists afresh. I did this while I was still unsettled, but without concealing for an instant either my churchmanship or my intention of seeking Holy Orders. It came about very naturally. As my heart was now on fire of God I went anywhere that I found

spiritual fervour, more especially as I wanted to test one school by observing the ways of others. I visited the Y.M.C.A. and was speedily drawn into service there by the good and generous secretary, Mr. Marshall Badger, who still remains a much-respected friend of mine. He was then and is now a communicant of the Church of England, and firmly evangelical in his views. But he never lost a chance of bringing all schools of thought together on his platform. I once had the satisfaction of securing Dean Paget for him for some function or other, notwithstanding the Dean's pronounced sacramental convictions which did not allow him to mix very much with bodies which did not share them. Through this Y.M.C.A. association I was brought into contact with Oxford Nonconformists, and was frequently asked to speak and even preach for them. With much fear and trembling I did so, for I was terribly nervous of public appearances, but soon got used to the sound of my own voice in religious assemblies. A friend of my father, Mr. Holmes, the local United Methodist minister, gave me plenty to do in this way and was one of the pleasantest companions I had during the whole period of my stay in Oxford. He was a very kind-hearted man, and he and Mrs. Holmes used to make me very welcome to their house. They were not in the least disturbed by the fact that I belonged to the Church of England, nor



in their view was it any disqualification for taking part in religious services under their auspices. This was the first time that Free Methodists, I judge, had ever heard of my existence. After my first year, at the request of the Dean I gave up appearing in Nonconformist assemblies. He said there was no harm in it, but that it seemed to him undesirable on several accounts. So, for the remainder of my undergraduate course, or nearly such, I stuck rigidly to my own communion and the society of Anglo-Catholics.

All this time I had been steadily reading for Orders concurrently with Divinity Moderations and the Preliminary Law Examination necessary for my degree work. I had begun the reading for Orders some time before coming up, so that by the end of my first year at Oxford I was ready for the Bishop's examination. I attended Canon Bright's lectures, and even thought of taking my degree in theology, but the Dean and my tutor both advised otherwise, quite rightly representing that a more general culture, such as the History School required, was preferable as a foundation for one's after work in the Church. By now I had become convinced that if I were ordained at all I ought to give myself wholly and sincerely to the priesthood, and no longer think of making it a mere addition to work of another sort. The only question before my mind was as to whether I were worthy of such

a vocation, and if so, how it could best be exercised.

But as the end of my course drew near I felt increasing difficulty in whole-heartedly accepting the Anglo-Catholic view of the Church and the ministry. I read all the apologetic of the school conscientiously. Never proportionately have I devoted so much time and attention to any literature as to that. I was steeped in it, but it did not hold me. If it had been a question of the devotional atmosphere only I should have been absolutely satisfied and at rest. If the lure of a single consecrated personality had been enough I should have been glad to follow Dean Paget anywhere. If temperament had been allowed to have its way I should have been a ritualist of the first order. But there were two outstanding facts I could not get over. The first was that in Nonconformity, and especially in the Presbyterianism of my childhood, I had seen a type of Christian character, and a piety as true and earnest, as anything within the Anglican system. The second was that, so far as one could then see, if the Anglo-Catholic theory of the Church were the true one I should not feel safe outside Rome, and I was not prepared to go to Rome.

As regards the former I had to admit that there were certain psychological differences to be taken into account. I think so still. There is no mistaking the fact that, on the whole,

Catholicism, Roman or Anglican, produces a somewhat different kind of character from that which is fostered by Protestantism, whether established as in the case of the Scottish and Lutheran Churches, or unestablished as in the evangelical Churches of England and America. That patent distinction seems to me more obvious now. I think it is Dr. John Hunter who says that Catholicism brings people to their knees and that Protestantism brings them to their feet, both attitudes being eternally true and necessary. I would myself add to this judgment the observation that where the sacrament of the altar is held in honour, you always get, or tend to get, a humbler, more docile, more refined type of piety. Individual instances pointing in a different direction do not invalidate this general statement. The strength and ruggedness of Nonconformity, as of old-time Puritanism, are scarcely compatible with what is to me the most attractive kind of devotion, nor even the most winsome Christian spirit. I have often heard Nonconformists say that the altar would come between them and Christ. Personally I have found the exact contrary, and no Catholic that I have ever heard of would say otherwise. It appears to me to be psychologically true that subjectivity in religion tends to isolation unless balanced by a sacramental view of life. And so far from encouraging spirituality it often

results in secularity. This is its besetting danger. Would any one seriously affirm that the demeanour of the average Nonconformist congregation is more reverential than that of the ordinary Anglican or Roman Catholic before the Blessed Sacrament? Is it not clear that the absence of sacraments tends to banish the consciousness of the supernatural, in its religious sense, whereas belief in the real presence tends to conserve it? I remember Father Bernard Vaughan once saying to me in the Jesuit Church in Farm Street, as we stood gazing together at the groups of silent kneeling worshippers, not one of whom turned a head towards us as we entered, that he could not understand how any spiritually-minded man could fail to recognise the divine presence under such conditions. He went on to apply the moral that the Church of England could not have that peculiar holy atmosphere because it did not possess the true apostolic succession. I freely admitted his premise, but not his conclusion. I told him I had had exactly the same feeling in St. Alban's, Holborn, and that I believed it to be caused by the sacrament itself, operating through the faith of those who prayed before it, and not to his particular theory of its efficacy. I have been conscious of it hundreds of times before and since in Roman churches abroad and Anglican churches wherein the sacrament is reserved at home.

Take any place of worship, Anglican or Non-conformist, wherein the sacramental idea finds no place, and—I say it with all respect—the peculiar quality of Catholic saintship at its best, that sweet, calm, lowly confidence with a touch of awe therein, that exalted serenity which it always exhibits, will be missing. It may be pointed out that the members of the Society of Friends are characterised thereby. That is not quite the case. They have their own special excellence, but it is not just that. And I have often thought that the Society of Friends, which professes to be the least sacramental of all Nonconformist bodies, is in reality more sacramental in its susceptibilities than any of them. All the Quakers I have ever known have illustrated this. Their habit of stillness, listening and expectant, renders them sensitively responsive to all higher influences through whatsoever media they may come. Readers of Whittier's poetry cannot fail to note this. And the Rev. Canon Hephner in his *Fruits of Silence* supplies an exceedingly interesting testimony to the same effect. As for other Nonconformists who believe more in speaking “with the tongues of men and of angels” than in the blessedness of silence, and assume that with the gift of prophecy they “understand all mysteries and all knowledge,” what I have said above confessedly holds good. The kind of character they make is fine and upright, strong,

fearless and independent, but it is seldom lowly or reverent in the fullest sense. Nevertheless, remembering my grandfather, I could not but be aware that it possessed true sanctity. And to unchurch that good man and the system that produced him seemed to me impossible. I argued that no one ecclesiastical system could be essential to the growth of Christian virtue or the maintenance of fellowship with God. Anglo-Catholics I felt to be non-suited in their main contention by the very fact of their denying apostolicity to so large a portion of Christendom wherein the fruits of holiness were so plainly apparent.

As regards the Church of Rome, my mind was equally clear though my ignorance was greater. I had no drawings toward Rome, nor could I feel that her historical record gave attestation to her claim to speak with exclusive authority in the name of the Most High. I know that venerable communion better now; in fact, I think I might fairly say that I know it as well as any outsider can. Some of my closest and best-loved friends are Roman priests, and I owe much to them. To one in particular, now getting on in years,<sup>1</sup> a distant relative on my mother's side, I owe a constantly mounting debt of gratitude. We have been intimate for the past

<sup>1</sup> Monsignor Canon Johnston. He has died since these words were written.



twenty years, and through him I have come into contact with many interesting Roman Catholics both in this country and on the Continent, and also in America. Throughout my ministry I have always been on friendly terms with Roman Catholics, and I think I may venture to say that they have always trusted me. Anything I have wanted to know they have told me frankly; any courtesy or consideration they could show has always been shown. Cardinal Bourne, for instance, took the trouble to make my visit to Spain some years ago exceedingly profitable and illuminating. I wanted to see something of the inside of Catholic life in that country, and told him so. He promptly opened all doors, and I was treated throughout my tour as if I had been a Catholic myself. Indeed, I was more than once taken for one, and on one occasion was actually asked to say Mass in a monastery in San Sebastian. When I enlightened my kind host he was greatly amused, and speculated as to what might have happened had I taken him at his word. I have always been a great traveller, and from what I have learned at first hand of the inside of the Roman Catholic Church in France, Spain, Italy and the United States I have shed any prejudices against her that I ever had. Her spiritual life is too real and deep to permit of any one who knows it describing her as apostate or anti-Christ or any



other of the deadly things militant Protestants are accustomed to charge against her. To be sure, the seamy side is there too, but where is it not? Never was a truer saying than that of George Tyrrell, that if Rome dies the other churches may order their coffins. As will be seen later, my study of Roman Catholic literature within the last ten years, as well as my constant intercourse with gifted representatives of that Church has had the curious, and I should think not very usual, effect of helping to draw me back to Anglicanism.

But while at Oxford I had no predilections in favour of Rome. I had a Roman Catholic coach for a time, a very able man, and I think I attended Mass at St. Aloysius twice, but I never had the faintest desire to make any closer acquaintance with it. Partly, no doubt, this was because in my history work I was familiarised with the sinister side of the political activities of the Papacy, and also with the moral slough into which it repeatedly fell. Besides, I felt then, and feel now, that Papal absolutism is an illicit development from apostolic Christianity. If it had been from the first what Roman apologists allege, the Fathers ought to have known more about it. No unprejudiced reader can avoid seeing that the extremest sacerdotalist among the Fathers does not think of the apostolic see in the same way that a modern Roman

Catholic does. It was not omnipresent to the former as it is to the latter.

This is not the place to argue the issue thus raised, even if it were called for, which it is not. I only make the remark in passing to indicate why I could never join the Church of Rome even if there were no doctrinal barrier in the way.

But at the period of which I am writing—that is, towards the end of my undergraduate course at Christ Church—I began to face seriously the question as to whether the Anglo-Catholic theory of churchmanship could defend itself against Rome. Not, I repeat, that I had any thought of Rome. The issue to me envisaged itself thus: If the Church is what my High Church preceptors say, then the best thing to do is to go over to Rome at once, for there can be no doubt about the genuineness of Roman orders, whereas there does seem to be a good deal of doubt about ours. And it is quite absurd to go over to Rome: therefore this theory of the Church does not fit the facts. Anglicanism itself is not entirely ruled by it, and the great non-episcopal bodies everywhere flourish on quite another. I stated my difficulties to the Dean, but I do not think he ever fully met them. Neither did any one else, and I grew more and more unwilling to go forward for ordination with the question left open. Bound up with this

question was another, that of the authority on which we accepted Christian doctrine. Problems began to accumulate in this sphere, and I wanted to think them out unfettered. I felt I must be free, and so in the end I told the Dean that I could not see my way to subscribe to the Prayer Book or, indeed, to any other formulary, and that I should enter my grandfather's communion wherein no doctrinal subscription was required. He told me, what I have since abundantly found to be true, that that supposed liberty did not really exist, or, if it did, it would mean the subversion of Christianity were it to be universally accepted, that the authority of tradition and reason must go hand-in-hand or nothing but anarchy could result, and much to the same effect. But his delicacy was too great to permit him to press me unduly when he saw that I had made up my mind. Gravely and wisely he talked to me for my own good, and continued to take exactly the same interest in my future as before. The night before finally leaving Oxford I had one last long conversation with this true servant of God, going from the Deanery to my rooms about midnight. I felt rather sad, but deeply impressed. I do not think I regretted the course I was taking. The decision had been made solemnly and prayerfully with such light as I had, and under the circumstances I felt quietly assured that God would bless it. Dean

Paget said he thought I should not be happy outside the Church, and that I should be compelled to return to her before long. In this he was mistaken, as events proved; it was twenty years before I returned to her, and in the meantime much had happened.

Of necessity I have had to omit many details leading up to the momentous choice here recorded. I was not given to wearing my heart on my sleeve or plaguing important people with interviews on my spiritual condition. For two years past I had been quite settled and at peace in my mind with regard to the main facts of my spiritual experience. Very humbly, I might almost have said with the apostle Paul: "To me, to live is Christ." From my first year at Oxford onwards our blessed Lord has ever been central and indispensable to my Christian life. My religion has been mainly my relationship to Him, though it has found varying modes of expression. It should not be overlooked that my discovery or re-discovery of Christ, and with it the definite awakening of my whole spiritual nature, was closely associated from the first with Anglo-Catholic sacramentalism, and I have never really got away from the effect thus produced upon my thought of Him. It has coloured all my teaching, even in its extremest liberalism, as many Anglicans have been quick to see. Thus Canon Hephher, already quoted, speaks of "the

sacramental leanings of Mr. Campbell's followers." Bishop Gore, Canon Adderley, Father Bull of the Mirfield Community, and others have spoken in the same strain. The exaggerated immanentism of the new theology was not a denial of the sacramental idea, but a perversion of it. And my hold on Christ never weakened, never wavered, never failed, despite all asseverations to the contrary. This was the great permanent acquisition of the spiritual quickening I underwent at Oxford. In my last year there questions ecclesiastical and theological emerged for solution, but did not overshadow it in the slightest. I was willing to go anywhere and do anything that might bring glory to my Lord, however small. I was, too, in the mood for sacrifice. The privileged position of the Anglican Church accorded ill with my longing for lowly and unpretentious service of Him who was content to be regarded on earth as the carpenter's son. I felt I would sooner work with those who had not social recognition than with those who had.

All that happened in the first instance after my refusal to be ordained was that I went on preparing for a resumption of academic occupation after taking my degree, but as a layman instead of a clergyman. I rather hoped to get a lectureship and stay on at the University. The Dean favoured this idea, especially as my excellent tutor, Arthur Hassall, the much appre-

ciated friend and guide of successive generations of history men at Christ Church, expected me to take a first in the honour schools. Alas for expectations ! when the great week came I was seized in the examination room on the very first day with one of the worst illnesses I have ever had. I was compelled to give up when I had only done, I think, one paper. To the best of my belief I only answered one question in that paper, or only one fully, and that was a question about the campaigns of Wallace, a subject I had never read a word about at Oxford, but remembered from my boyish enthusiasms about that romantic hero in my north of Ireland days. I think I remember Mr. Hassall telling me afterwards that I was the only candidate who attempted it. Anyhow I did not attempt much else. I fainted twice outside the examination room and had to be taken home, the doctor refusing to allow me to go back. It was a terrible blow, and I thought it would ruin my academic prospects. But Mr. Hassall, like the kind-hearted and energetic guardian of his pupils' interests he has ever been, took prompt action, with the result that the examiners resolved to invite me up to Oxford again when I was well enough to travel and put me through a further test. This was wonderfully good of them. Perhaps the Wallace paper influenced their decision a little, I do not know. But it did not seem to me to be of much



use, as when I actually did come I was still quite unfit to make any serious effort. However, I soon found when I got there that the very human group of high authorities who had matters in charge, with Mr. A. L. Smith, the present master of Balliol, at their head, knew all about me and had arranged accordingly. The examination was only a form in order to comply with the statutes. They kept me but a few minutes, and employed most of the time in friendly condolence on my mishap. They had already made up their minds what to do, and gave me a place in the second class. Mr. Hassall also insisted that there was not the least reason why I should not put in at once for a University appointment. It was too late, however; the die was cast, as will be seen. I had chosen another course. It is worth remark, perhaps, that only two days after my induction as a Congregational minister in Brighton I received a letter from Oxford asking whether I would consider the offer of a lectureship. How differently one's lot would have shaped itself had I sent an affirmative reply, which I could not in decency do ! It was not to be.

Some time before, I forget at what date precisely, the minister of George Street Congregational Church, Oxford, happened to be in Brighton and mentioned my name to the authorities of Union Street Church there. They were looking for a minister, and I think he must



have been aware of the fact, though whether he suggested me as a likely person to fill the vacancy I do not know. I should suppose that he did not go so far, merely indicating that I might be invited to occupy the pulpit for a Sunday. I went, and the immediate and unexpected result was a unanimous call to take full charge of the church. I submitted this to Dr. Fairbairn as the one person I knew best qualified to advise in the matter. His first opinion is recorded above, and had such weight with me that I declined the invitation. After a short interval it was made a second time and with greater insistence than before. I took the letter straight to Dr. Fairbairn and laid it before him without a word. He read it quietly through, and then, folding it up and handing it back to me, said very solemnly and emphatically: "You cannot decline this; it is a call of God." So I thought myself, and still do. Without further delay I notified my acceptance to the Brighton people, and so ended one of the most important chapters in my history, and another and widely different one began.

It may be of some interest to recall here in this connection that I spent the last day before commencing my work at Brighton in the Cloisters at Westminster Abbey with Canon Gore as he then was. We talked over many things, but perhaps he will remember two observations in

particular which he made to me on that occasion. He warned me that what he called my mystical tendencies needed to be carefully watched, as they were apt to lead to pantheism; and secondly, he expressed the firm conviction that such a temperament as mine could not find permanent satisfaction in Nonconformity, but would be bound to return to the Church sooner or later. In this he has proved to be a true prophet.

Dean Paget wrote as follows—

“First let me tell you with what sympathy I viewed the failure of health which hindered you showing in the Schools the outcome of your hard and persevering work. I was, indeed, and am, deeply sorry for it. Such disappointments are very difficult to bear, but I am sure that you will bear yours in the spirit which wrests from disappointments their hidden good, and sometimes enables men to look back after a while and see them in an aspect very different from what they were at first.

“I will follow the example of your reserve and not enter into the choice which you have made in joining the Congregationalist ministry. For I need not tell you how sure I am that you have acted with sincerity and with an earnest desire to do good, and that you have not acted without grave and prolonged thought. I venture

to trust heartily that your work and influence in the ministry to which you have given yourself may be like that of two whom I have been privileged to reckon among my friends—Dr. R. W. Dale and Dr. G. Barrett.

“You have shown among us strength of character as well as of intellect, and your career at Christ Church has been without blame—you have worked, I fear, beyond what your strength allowed—and it was an excellent promise of success that was checked by your illness.”

This letter by the Dean's desire was read to the Church at Brighton at what is usually termed the official recognition of one newly admitted to the ministry. Another dangerous illness occurred on my return from South Africa in 1900 during the Boer War. I had contracted enteric fever, and Dr. Paget again wrote—

“I cannot tell you how very sorry I am to hear of your serious illness : the news of it came to me as a sudden shock. I am heartily thankful to hear that you have reached the stage of convalescence, and I trust earnestly that you may have, please God, a happy and unhindered recovery. There is often, I think, a sense of rest and quiet in that sheltered time of convalescence which one hardly gets in any other holiday.”

The rest of the letter is too private for publication. The Dean became Bishop in the following year, and only once afterwards did I have the opportunity of any long conversation with him, but that is a happy memory. I met him during a short tour in Normandy, and we visited scenes of interest in company. After my coming to the City Temple our intercourse practically ceased, as he was no longer head of the College and I seldom visited Oxford.

## CHAPTER IV

### MINISTRY IN BRIGHTON

OLD Union Street Church, Brighton, to which I was now appointed, was the mother Nonconformist church of the district. It dated from 1662, having been founded by one of the ministers ejected from the national church under the Act of Uniformity on St. Bartholomew's Day of that fateful year. Nonconformity may, properly speaking, be said to have begun then. One wonders what might have happened if a wiser and more tolerant policy had been pursued by those in power at the time; we should have been saved centuries of religious bitterness and strife. No doubt it was too much to expect of human nature in the circumstances of the moment. Episcopacy had for so long been proscribed and persecuted under the Puritan régime that it is no wonder the reaction was so violent and went to such extremes. It should not be forgotten either that a considerable proportion of the two thousand who were thus deprived of their cures had been installed by Cromwell's Triers, and in other ways at the

expense of the Laudian school, and indeed of prelacy in general. Very many of them were really Presbyterians and would never have been content to accept episcopal rule, however mild. Something drastic needed to be done to restore order within the Church, but it is to be deplored that what actually was done was so harsh and overbearing as to drive out into the wilderness the most scholarly, devout, and earnest elements among the clergy. Had they been retained under wise and statesman-like safeguards the distinctively English religious development known as Nonconformity would never have taken root. There would have been no voluntary secession on a large scale. It should never be lost sight of that the schisms from which we are suffering to-day have been far more the creation of the establishment than of the sectarian bodies themselves, the rise of Methodism being the last flagrant instance of this. Nonconformists did not willingly become Separatists; they were driven out. Let this be remembered in all serious overtures to win them back.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of course I am not begging the question as to the gravity of the issue at stake between the original Nonconformists in the strict sense of the term (whose Nonconformity did not extend to a desire for separation) and the Anglicans, properly so called. The Puritan party wished for a complete break with the past, and would have destroyed the historic fabric of the Church. But what I suggest is that a more generous treatment would have retained and ultimately won them.



Union Street was very proud of its history. This is a feature of Nonconformity that I have noticed over and over again. If a church can trace its origin to some capital date in our national life—and the farther back the better—it never loses sight of the fact; nor does the tradition fail to exercise a certain influence upon the character of the society itself. This was certainly the case with Union Street. One felt that it was not of yesterday; everybody felt this. It had a wealth of memories extending over generations, and I used to fancy that the people partook of the quality of their grave and sober predecessors who had for so long worshipped in that sacred place. They were remarkably independent in their ways, yet quiet and homely, and full of the spirit of mutual loyalty and human kindness. It was a matter of pride with them that there never had been any grave disputes in connection with that house of prayer, nor any disorders worthy of record. I can quite believe it. In contradistinction to some other Nonconformist societies they were always loving and united, and nothing if not unobtrusive and self-contained. The building itself was Georgian, with a few stones included from the original seventeenth century erection. Its trust deed was of the widest, and just suited me, for its only doctrinal clause, if such it can fitly be termed, ran somewhat thus: “This church was erected



for the good of the parish and district of Brighton." A basis so comprehensive as this was not without its perils, as we found later when removing to more suitable premises. Any Mohammedan or Mormon getting inside the building while it stood empty might have plausibly claimed to be fulfilling the trust by holding services in it in accordance with his own notions. I do not know what view the courts might have taken of the matter. Probably the Charity Commissioners might have had something to say in such an event. Happily it was never put to the test.

The church had fallen on evil days. A century earlier most of the land round about belonged to it, but this had been filched away little by little until now nothing was left but the ground it stood on, and even that was so severely restricted that the building was tucked away up a side alley with nothing to show the public that a place of worship existed there at all. No vehicle could approach it, and the faithful few who attended it were in danger of being "the world forgetting, by the world forgot." They had been for some time without a settled minister, and were gradually reduced to a mere handful, for as the old stalwarts died off there were none to take their places. If I remember rightly there were about sixty members of the church at the time I accepted the charge. An invalid minister,

a returned missionary, a man of considerable culture and charm of spirit, had stepped into the gap and officiated for some months before my coming, as well as his health would allow. The people loved him greatly, and so did I, for he and his wife remained on at the church for some time after I began my work, to my no small advantage. They are both still living, and I had the joy of renewing old acquaintance with them at Bournemouth the day before my return to communion in the Church of England last year.

Of my time at Union Street I can say no more and no less than that it was one of the happiest of my whole ministerial career. I entered upon my duties there in the summer of 1895, ere I had fully recovered from the illness above referred to, the result being that I had another serious breakdown in the autumn and had to go away for some months. The good people, who as yet scarcely knew me at all, rose instantly to the situation, refusing by resolution to accept the offer to resign which was sent from my sick bed. My medical advisers thought me unfit to assume the burden of a church, and doubtless they were right. But my kind little flock would not listen to this opinion. They sent word that I could do as much or as little as I liked so long as I remained their minister, and on that understanding I returned to them before the close of the year.

Before long the church proved too small to contain our congregations, and ultimately arrangements were made for amalgamation with a daughter church some little distance away which possessed more commodious buildings. But these were not of the best, and various schemes were set on foot for the erection of a beautiful Nonconformist church in the centre of Brighton to which I might minister, and which could at the same time furnish a sort of denominational headquarters for the county. Had any of these fructified before my call to the City Temple I should not have been able to leave, as they would only have been undertaken on the express understanding that I remained to see them through. The united church was known henceforth as Union Church, Queen Square, and still bears that name.

During my twenty years as a Nonconformist minister I had but two churches, Union Church, Brighton, and the City Temple, London. This is, I think, a not very common record, and was made possible only by the extraordinary love and loyalty of my people in both instances. I have been exceptionally favoured in this respect, for, whatever may be true of my ecclesiastical associations at large, I have always been able to win and retain the affection of my congregations. It is of God's goodness that it was so, otherwise I could not have done my work at all, especially

when seasons of public trial and opposition came. Numerous invitations were extended to me during my Brighton ministry to go elsewhere, but as I am by temperament averse to changes, and was more than content with the flock of my first love, I refused them all till the City Temple came on the scene. One of the most interesting of these approaches, in view of later developments, came from Dr. Forsyth, the present Principal of Hackney College. On his coming to London in 1901 he wished me to succeed him at Cambridge, putting the suggestion on the modest ground that he had never been able to get inside the University life there, and that he thought I was specially qualified to do so, and had a gift for laying hold of young men of the undergraduate type. I was not in a position to accept a call, and therefore did not allow the matter to proceed to the stage of serious discussion. The building project was on hand at Brighton. We had just acquired certain property adjoining the church premises, for which the purchase money had to be raised. Till that was done or well on the way towards it there could be no question of my undertaking another charge.

In May 1902 Dr. Parker, whose health had begun to fail, came down to Brighton to see me, and was my guest for some days. He had an idea in his mind that I could assist him by coming up and down and preaching at the City Temple

as might be wanted from time to time. We discussed the matter carefully, but I could not see my way to fall in with such an arrangement, as I felt it would not be fair to the Brighton church. Later he put forward the suggestion that I should be appointed to the King's Weigh House church in West London and co-operate with him in the same way; and it may be interesting to note that this association of the City Temple with the King's Weigh House church (sister churches from the seventeenth century onward) was actually realised for a time years afterwards during my London ministry. At the moment, however, I had to tell Dr. Parker that I did not think the King's Weigh House church or any other church would be likely to invite me to a position which would subordinate its convenience to that of the City Temple. Finally, before he left we agreed that I was to help him with the famous Thursday morning service whenever he felt unequal to taking it himself. There was not the same objection to this as there would have been to Sunday work.

In the following October a telegram from him claimed fulfilment of the promise. He was stricken down with what proved to be his last illness, and had decided to suspend the Thursday service unless I could assume immediate responsibility for it. I did so, and from that moment my connection with the City Temple commenced.



Dr. Parker died a few weeks later, and I found myself in a most delicate position. It was one thing to preach in the City Temple on Thursday mornings with him living, and quite another thing to do it when he was gone. The office-bearers pressed me to continue it, and I consented, but while the matter was in the balance approaches were made to me by city men with a view to getting me in any eventuality to preach once a week in London, they guaranteeing to find a suitable pulpit. But there was no need to do that. I simply went straight on, the only embarrassment being that what must come to pass was now obvious to my Brighton congregation. I did not tell any one at the time, but on the last occasion when I saw Dr. Parker, the dying man himself solemnly consecrated me to the new charge, painfully raising himself on the bed and laying his hand upon me and saying, "The Lord bless you a thousandfold more than He has blessed me." I was deeply impressed, and left the death chamber with the conviction that my Brighton ministry was ended. Afterwards I found, but not till I had accepted the call from the City Temple, that Dr. Parker had confided to one or two others his wish that I might be appointed his successor without delay, so that the work should go on uninterruptedly. But as the church did not know this, the action of the members in calling me to fill his place was

entirely their own, under God's guidance as I fully believe. †

Thus terminated eight years of strenuous work in Brighton. For most of the time I had been a member of the School Board and had taken a more or less prominent part in municipal affairs. The Corporation generally looked to me to represent Nonconformist interests on public occasions, and in this way I was brought into relationship with representative churchmen whom I am still glad to count among my friends, and who have one and all exhibited great and cordial interest in my reception into the ministry of the Church of England. I found it no easy matter to part from my congregation, which was as unique in its way as that at the City Temple has always been. It was mainly a personal congregation consisting largely of Anglicans. For some reason I have never been able to attract the strong and determined Nonconformist, but liberal Anglicans have always attended my ministry in large numbers. The late W. E. H. Lecky, the eminent historian, was a frequent worshipper at Union Church, and I am thankful to have known a mind so rich and a spirit so gracious as his. Canon Fleming often came in the season and brought others with him. The late Sir Henry Campbell Bannerman, Mr. Birrell, and Mr. Lloyd George were amongst my guests at Brighton at one time or another; in fact,



my house soon became a sort of rendezvous for outstanding people of all denominations and of none, who began the acquaintance by coming to hear me and then calling upon me. Mr. Lecky and Sir Henry Campbell Bannerman, though widely opposed in home politics, were at one in their estimate of the seriousness of the Boer War, which the British people were treating as a sort of summer diversion when it first broke out. I well remember the former saying to me that from what he knew of the history and psychology of the Dutch race, he thought we had very little idea of what we were undertaking. I owe much to the writings of this distinguished man from first to last, especially, perhaps, to his *History of European Morals* and *Rise and Influence of Rationalism in Europe*. I am glad to possess a copy of his *Map of Life*—the last book from his pen—which he was good enough to present to me with his own hand.

Amongst Nonconformists I had few intimate friends then or at any other time, a fact to which I attribute most of the misconception which attended my later ministry. Personal touch is everything in such a case, and I did not possess it. This was partly, no doubt, my own fault—I ought to have mixed with my brother ministers more, and taken more account of their prejudices as well as their deep-rooted convictions—but partly it was due to other causes. I had not

been trained in one of their theological seminaries. I did not realise until long after I was in the Nonconformist ministry that there is a species of Trades Unionism about it. Men who belong to the same institution or group of institutions naturally hang together, and outsiders are on a different footing. My own great college was no recommendation to Nonconformity. Still, I admit this could have been got over if I had taken the necessary pains, which I never did; and if I were having my time over again I should take care to cultivate Nonconformist fellowship more earnestly. It does not do to stand aloof, and is harmful in many ways. Isolation means loss of sympathy and of the force that comes of corporate action.

My best friend in the ministry was Dr. Horton of Hampstead, though I seldom saw him. Up to a point his mind moved on the same lines as my own, and his mystic piety strongly appealed to me. He is a man deservedly loved and honoured far beyond the borders of his own denomination; and I shall never forget while I live his generous championship of my right to liberty of speech and to common Christian charity when the controversy about my teaching first began. The beautiful spirit of his plea did much to assuage the bitterness with which I was being assailed at the moment. Almost the same might be said of Dr. Clifford, surely one of

the most large-hearted protagonists Nonconformity has ever had. The vehemence of his onslaughts on the Church and the Bishops has misled many as to his real character. More than once during the Education wrangle which raged so furiously under the last Conservative Government I tried to get Mr. Balfour to meet Dr. Clifford socially, but he firmly refused. He would meet almost anybody else, he said, but not a person so harsh and vituperative as the doctor. I hope Mr. Balfour will not mind my recording this now; it is merely amusing at this distance of time. Dr. Clifford's strength of language must be acknowledged to have been considerable at that period, but of all the men I have ever known none have a greater title to respect and admiration. There is no slightest touch of smallness or selfishness in his whole make-up; he is the most magnanimous little giant in the world. I look back with peculiar pleasure to one day during the later period of my Brighton ministry when Dr. Parker, Dr. Clifford, Dr. Alexander McLaren of Manchester, Dr. Horton, and the Rev. J. H. Shakespeare all sat at my table together. I believe it was the last time Dr. Parker and Dr. McLaren met in this world. Mr. Shakespeare is another man with whom I have been for many years on terms of cordial friendship and hope to remain so until the end. As President of the National Free

Church Council for the current year he is handling a great scheme for the welding of all the historic Nonconformist bodies into one united Free Church of England. He has the brain of a statesman, and if any one can succeed in such a project it is he. I hope I do not say too much in adding that at the same time he is playing a leading part in the *pourparlers* which are going on between appointed representatives of Anglicanism and those of Nonconformity with a view ultimately to a larger union still. God's blessing attend them.

These reminiscences might be greatly extended; I have not mentioned a tithe of the interesting people with whom I have been brought into relations at various points in my life-history. But as I am not writing an autobiography, but merely sketching the course of my career in so far as it bears upon my own spiritual development, most of this must necessarily be omitted. One further fact ought perhaps to be stated. I never lost a single Roman Catholic or Anglican friend during the new theology controversy; I scarcely retained a single Nonconformist one. Those still living of the group above mentioned were exceptions. Differing *toto cælo* from me on certain matters of doctrine, they nevertheless forbore to join in personal attacks upon me. We scarcely ever met, as perhaps was natural under the circum-

stances; but my intercourse with churchmen went straight on unimpeded. Therein lies a consideration of some moment.

Before taking leave of this retrospect of my life in Brighton, it is desirable to show what influences were at work upon my thought during those eight years, and what consequently the character of my pulpit teaching was. Broadly speaking, I was from the start what might be called liberal evangelical in my tendencies—liberal because I could see no mean between acceptance of ecclesiastical authority and the complete exercise of private judgment, and evangelical because Nonconformity was evangelical. But, as has been seen above, the very fact that I had declined ordination in the Church of England rather than restrict the conception of churchmanship to those possessing or claiming to possess the historic episcopate, threw me back upon a theory of the Church which left little room for corporate association at all; and, as a matter of fact, that is the great weakness of Congregationalism. To me religion was now mainly a matter of the individual culture of the spiritual life and, as a direct consequence thereof, the voluntary association of spiritually-minded persons in Christian fellowship and acts of worship. But as my preaching had not the evangelistic note it was viewed with some amount of distrust by thorough-going evangelicals, my

evangelicalism consisting chiefly in devotional fervour. What evangelicals missed, I think, in my way of putting things was certain phrases to which they were and are accustomed to attach considerable importance, such as frequent references to conversion, the blood of Christ, and the like. I seldom made use of such expressions.

My student habits I retained as far as was possible to a busy minister, and being at all times an inveterate book-lover, I gradually amassed a library of some few thousand volumes. I had a system of reading which Sir William Robertson Nicoll once humorously said it gave him a shudder to look at, but I have adhered to it more or less throughout my adult life. Following a definite order, I kept a number of large, leather-bound, indexed ledger notebooks on my shelves, divided into subjects, and into these I used to enter week by week the results of my reading and reflection. Small, thin, black notebooks were my inseparable companions during the reading itself, and still are; I am never without them; I have filled thousands of them; it is second nature to me to have one always at hand when reading anything whatever, not necessarily to copy passages into it, but to record my own comments on what is read. I recommend the method to young men; it is not much trouble, and has the merit of giving the reader a mastery of what he reads. What Dr. Nicoll, as



he then was, meant by saying it gave him a shudder to investigate it was that he thought it too slavish, but it was not so. His own method appeared to be to read what interested him and nothing else, of course discursively, and to rely upon a prodigious memory afterwards. I am afraid that would not pay, generally speaking, if a minister were desirous to acquire a working knowledge of the best books requisite for his mental equipment as preacher and teacher.

It is interesting to me to turn anew to these old ledgers of mine and retrace the course of one's study in the various departments of human thought and experience in which it was desirable for a preacher to be informed. To take philosophy first, I should remark that while I have never professed an expert acquaintance with this great subject, the course of my mental activities lying chiefly in other directions, I felt it my duty to obtain a sufficiently adequate knowledge of the history of thought to enable me to place and form a judgment upon modern systems of belief and practice. I had a *penchant* for philosophy, and might have done something in it had the conditions of one's lot made that way. I was not without some introduction to it before going to Brighton. As part of my honour degree course in History and Political Science I had to work through a good deal of Plato and Aristotle. Descartes and Locke came



within my purview at this time also, together with Pascal, in whom I have ever since retained a certain interest from the psychological as well as the religious point of view. Kant I did not touch till later, nor indeed did I then know much about modern thinkers. Anything like serious and detailed philosophical study was necessarily out of the question while reading for honours in another school; it only came in, as it were, as subsidiary to my main work for my degree. But I did manage to familiarise myself more or less with the greater Greeks and their pioneer work for the world in envisaging the problem of problems, man himself and the why and wherefore of his existence here on earth. If it be true that every man is born either a Platonist or an Aristotelian, my affinities have unquestionably always been with the former.

Soon after leaving Oxford I made the acquaintance of my distinguished namesake, the late Professor Lewis Campbell, who happened to be staying in Brighton, and I read with close interest his *Religion in Greek Literature*, which he presented to me as a souvenir, and which I believe still holds an important place amongst the principal authorities in a field which has yet to be largely worked. It helped to bring into proportion for me the religious bearing of the work I had been doing at Oxford in Platonism and its

adjuncts. It gave me a conspectus of the ground covered by the Greek mind, so to speak, viewed from the Christian standpoint, although it was not a philosophical treatise and did not pretend to be such.

In modern philosophy I began with Edward Caird, who succeeded Jowett as Master of Balliol during my time at Oxford. His *Evolution of Religion*, published about that period, and his earlier essays sufficed me for some years after the commencement of my Brighton ministry as the basis of such theology as I had, a fact which may be noted by any who have acquainted themselves with my first published book of sermons, *A Faith for To-day*. These sermons, preached in 1899 and issued in 1900, were intended as suggestions towards a system of Christian doctrine, and they exhibit quite clearly the traces of the Neo-Hegelian influence under which they were evolved. Caird inherited from Jowett his Hegelian sympathies, but I do not know enough of Jowett's mind to be able to say how far the pupil was independent of the master in his attempt to harmonise Hegel and Kant. I have always thought Caird very suggestive and gifted with a clear though uninspiring style. Jowett's more remarkable pupil, T. H. Green, I never knew. He was before my time at Oxford, and it is to my loss that I never had the opportunity of sitting at his feet. In later days I

made acquaintance with his system through that of Bradley, whereas it should have been the other way round. I read *Appearance and Reality* first, and the *Prolegomena to Ethics* afterwards. Before going up to Oxford I had, through the influence of a friend with whom I was reading, attempted to wade through Herbert Spencer's *System of Synthetic Philosophy*. We stuck to it for about eighteen months concurrently with other work, and mastered the *First Principles* pretty thoroughly, together with the *Principles of Psychology*, the *Study of Sociology*, and the *Data of Ethics*, though I should not like to be called upon to pass an examination in any of it now. My companion was an enthusiastic Spencerian, but I was not and never have been. At a much later period—in fact, just about the time of my coming to the City Temple—Professor James Ward's Gifford Lectures on *Naturalism and Agnosticism* came into my hands and blew to pieces whatever lingering remnants of Spencer's theories may have remained with me. His criticisms, not only of Spencer's positions, but of those of Huxley and Tyndall, were both severe and contemptuous, and, I should think, about ten years too late. But what interested me most in this remarkable work was its respectful treatment of Spiritualistic Monism. The author admitted that for philosophy a satisfactory monism was still to seek, but he urged that

agnostic monism must either fall back into crass materialism or advance to spiritualism. Huxley himself appeared to be fully conscious of this and leaned towards the latter side of the alternative. The observation, if I may venture to say so, confirmed my own impressions of years before, and I was glad to see it advanced on such high authority. Agnosticism made no appeal to me in my Oxford days or earlier, for I felt then, as I feel now, that Plato's "instinct for reality," which is the very foundation of religious experience, had nothing corresponding to it in Spencer's philosophy of the Unknowable. In other words, what was most vital to my own experience had no foothold in his system and no explanation. Ward showed me why, and left me with a still stronger bias towards a monistic view of the relations of individual self-conscious being to the universal, spiritually construed.

In Spinoza I found considerably more to feed the religious sense than in Spencer, and a great deal that accorded with my own predilections, much to the horror of Canon Hastings Rashdall, to whom I once confessed it. He and I were pitted against each other in a private discussion which took place before an assembly of clergy with Dean Fremantle in the chair. The subject, I believe, was that of "the philosophical basis of the mystical consciousness," or something of the kind, and I remember saying in the

course of my reply to Dr. Hastings Rashdall that my type of liberalism had more affinities with Spinoza than with Hegel, though it had begun with the latter. This struck him as a most perilous admission to make and one fraught with consequences which he did not think were obvious to myself, such as the destructive effect of Spinozism upon Christian morality. I have but little time to go back to the study of Spinoza now, but I should think there is much truth in this observation. The one great danger which haunts all monistic systems, be they materialistic or spiritualistic, is that of a weakening of the moral appeal: I see no escape from it. Nevertheless I should here record that my old friend, James Allanson Picton, formerly a Congregational minister and afterwards member of Parliament for Leicester, and in his prime a notable Nonconformist personality, was a convinced and earnest Spinozist, and at the same time one of the strongest moral forces I have ever known. His *Religion of the Universe* was an application of Spinozism to modern conditions and deserves to be better known than it is. In it he insists on the definite reality of conscience and moral obligation, while admitting the insoluble difficulty of assuming "disturbed moral relations in the system of a perfect Whole."<sup>1</sup> Often have I heard him say, "Be your philosophy what it

<sup>1</sup> *Religion and the Universe*, p. 191.

may, moral relations remain just the same." In personal appearance he was something like Ruskin and was very similar in temperament. He had all Ruskin's capacity for moral indignation, and was himself austere and conscientious in his private life. He was accustomed to maintain of Spinoza that that "God-intoxicated man" had not yet come into his own. Certainly if Spinoza's own life is a criterion of the results of his philosophy it is a high testimonial, for probably a purer, humbler, braver, or more charitable soul never lived.

Berkeley's *Idealism* took me a certain way. I never could have been classified as a Spinozist, and would have been unwilling to be so designated. Mr. Picton knew this, and on one occasion very generously defended me in the Press from the charge of Pantheism. But a Berkeleian I more nearly was. I read Berkeley out of his due chronological order, following Caird, and found much in his system to appeal to me, even to the extent of making the jump which it compels one to make from the experience of the individual to the admission that there must be other experiences like it; a consistent idealism is impossible. Kant, the great epoch maker in the thought of the modern world, made that clear to me once for all. I read the *Kritik* in 1899, teaching it at the same time to a class of young people. It was not until I became



familiar with the work of Professor (now Sir Henry) Jones that I met what really satisfied me under this head. His *Idealism as a Practical Creed* still appears to me to be the best treatise of its kind existing, and a wholesome corrective to Bradley in more ways than one. It is as full of spirituality as any definitely religious book, and more than most. It did not appear until 1909, but may very well be included here. For some time previous I had been getting beyond the Neo-Hegelianism of Caird, though without repudiating my indebtedness to it. It rationalised the Logos doctrine for me, and supplied me with a view of the purpose of creation which as a working hypothesis seems to fit the facts of experience better than any other. Where it fails, I think, is in its soteriology, but this is not the place in which to criticise it even if there were need to do so, which there is not. It is as the father of the Pragmatists that I have since learned to look to T. H. Green, though I have no doubt he would have repudiated that designation had he lived long enough to have it thrust upon him. The method of Professors William James and F. C. S. Schiller is nothing but a reaction against the attempts of the idealists to define the nature of the Absolute. Professor James held this to be unduly speculative, and maintained that we have to confine ourselves to working values in religion as in everything else,



that there is, in fact, an irreconcilable opposition between knowledge and faith.

To Professor James's writings I am greatly indebted, not because I accept his conclusions, or have ever done so, but because of the clearness of his critical method. His charm of style is one of the greatest secrets of his influence. I have read most that he has written, but perhaps his *Will to Believe* and his famous Gifford Lectures on *Varieties of Religious Experience* I have found most useful. The *Humanism* of Professor Schiller has a similar grace of style and shrewdness of analysis, but surely if ever a system was misnamed it is this. The word Humanism has been too long associated with the revival of letters and with literary culture in general to be properly appropriated by a school of philosophy. I once had a short correspondence with Mr. Schiller concerning a remark I had made about his system in the *British Weekly*. I had said I could not be a Pragmatist, and his comment was that if there were a Pragmatist on earth I was the man. I still think I was right in the sense in which I used the words. Pragmatism is more a method than a system; from the point of view of method only we are all more or less Pragmatists. But the originators of the name profess to do more than elaborate a method, they do outline a system; and their system in my judgment is not one which is likely to help the

truly religious mind very far. With Professor James's "multiverse" theory nothing would induce me to have anything to do; the human mind can never rest in the contemplation of anything short of the absolute unity that underlies all existence. On any other postulate what becomes of thought itself? How can mind reflect upon an order which is not an order, or rather upon a whole which is not a whole but a perhaps incoherent multiplicity? A fundamental act of faith is needed for any effective thought upon the nature of things, and that is that the very constitution of the mind corresponds to the constitution of the universe. We can think at all only because the whole of which we are parts is not chaos but cosmos.<sup>1</sup>

But I must not wander off into *obiter dicta* upon this or that specific contribution to humanity's sustained effort to understand itself and its world. I am only concerned to trace my own footsteps on the road I have travelled up to the present. It will be noted that of scholastic philosophy I knew nothing beyond what was necessary for threading my way

<sup>1</sup> My only justification for passing the above jejune criticism is that it indicates the opposition of my mind to pluralism at that period and subsequently. My attitude is much the same to-day. Needless to say, I am not presumptuous enough to suppose that this is an adequate examination of the subject. It does no more than illustrate where I stood.

through the intricacies of the mediæval disputations of Nominalists and Realists in the course of my historical studies. I have forgotten most of it now. It is only of comparatively recent date that I have seriously begun the *Summa* of St. Thomas Aquinas. I find it as fascinating as it is massive, the counterpart of the thirteenth-century Gothic cathedral, as it has often been described. But as Rome is committed to it, one can see that this fact alone constitutes a sufficient reason why that great church must remain aloof from the modern habit of mind and all it implies. It is a far cry from St. Thomas to Bergson, though not so far from Duns Scotus to Henry Jones.

Newman I have always read with mingled delight and repulsion. His *Essay on Development* and his *Grammar of Assent* never appealed to me beyond their interest as dialectical performances. No wonder Rome distrusted him for twenty years after his conversion, however. Those very works give the ordinary Roman case away. He was no ultramontane. A theologian who calmly tells us that "formulated dogmas are not essential to the genuineness or perfection of religion or religious belief" is dangerous to Roman claims, to say the least. In this connection I may be permitted to add with what pleasure and profit I read Mr. Wilfrid Ward's *Catholic Life of Newman* when it came out a year or two ago.

It had long been wanted, and throws valuable light upon a period of the great Oratorian's career not hitherto well known to the general public. I read the *Apologia* when at Oxford and many times since, always with admiration, never with more than discriminating approval. I cannot help thinking that poor Kingsley has had less than justice done to him over the episode that called forth that now classical piece of personal justification. Newman's novels, which, like Robert Hugh Benson's long afterwards, were little more than proselytising tracts, and suffered as works of fiction accordingly, I never cared much about; they neither met nor even exhibited any cognisance of the kind of difficulties I was having to face at that time. How little knowledge the author ever had of Dissent, and how little sympathy with or respect for it, is evident in every page of them.

But it was in the literature of mysticism that I found what appealed to me most at this period and subsequently, perhaps too much so. Plotinus and the Neoplatonists were my starting point, but I read everything in this field that I could lay my hands on. It answered strongly to something in myself, in my spiritual instincts and mental and psychical make-up, which I confess I have never been able to discard. I was ever conscious of a craving for a super-intellectual union with Deity, and in the great

mystics, and these only, did I find anything like what I wanted, boldly and uncompromisingly proclaimed. I felt it must be the truth, and drank it in with avidity. I do not mean that the fantastic developments of later Neoplatonism had any attraction for me; they had not; but in Plotinus I found, and still find, much that seems to me of the very essence of personal religion. About the same time—that is, in the later years of my Brighton ministry—I began to make acquaintance with Professor Max Müller's translations of the Sacred Books of the East. I know now, what I did not know then, that these were but a selection of what was best worth preserving out of piles of rubbish, and even as it was they contained great quantities of dreary and unedifying matter. Still, they had a certain charm for me. Their naïve insistence on the illusoriness of the phenomenal, and their fundamental identification of the many and the One, accorded with my perceptions.

The dangerous pantheistic implications of this mode of thought I did not dwell upon, nor yet the moral torpor it has proved itself apt to induce in the lands where it prevails. Critics may regard this confession as accounting for a great deal in my teaching, and as indicating that the latter derived largely from non-Christian sources. I admit the naturalness of that deduction, but cannot concede its truth. I never at any time

paltered with the ethical standards of Christianity in my utterances in the pulpit or out of it. Nor was it extra-Christian mysticism that really influenced me very far. The fundamental principle of mysticism is the same the world over and in all ages—namely, the realisation of the essential oneness of the soul with God—but its pagan phases are not to be compared with the Christian for richness of content and warmth of devotional feeling. What interested me in the fields I have named was to find how near to the Kingdom of God these Greek and Hindu thinkers and dreamers came, how remarkably their experience approximated to that of the Christian saint; they spoke with similar tongue and told something of the same tale. And this is indeed the most striking thing about the mystics. East and West, ancient and modern, Christian and non-Christian, Catholic and Protestant, they evidently tread much the same pathway and arrive at much the same view of the relations of the soul with super-sensible reality—surely a presumption in favour of the genuineness of what they claim to know, or, rather, to have seen. I saw, or thought I saw, in it the only effectual counteractive to the sombre but aggressive materialistic philosophy of the time. Haeckel's *Riddle of the Universe* was being read everywhere. Young people were continually asking me about it, and how it was to be met.



My invariable reply was that it was one form of monism against another—the materialistic against the spiritual—and that in such a case the mystic had an experience to declare which not all the pessimistic affirmations in the world could do anything to weaken, much less destroy. The question was not so much whether existence was a unity or a plurality, but what the nature of the unity was in which we and the whole universe, visible and invisible, live and move and have our being.

Dean Inge's Bampton Lectures on *Christian Mysticism*, a truly delightful book and now the standard authority on the general subject for English readers, introduced me to a literature in which I have found much joy as well as profit. Under his guidance I read assiduously in the works of the great Christian mystics. I had already begun it with Du Prel's *Philosophy of Mysticism*, but it is to him that I am indebted for being able to do it more systematically. I turned afresh to St. Augustine as mystic rather than theologian, and learned to understand with truer insight the influence of his Neoplatonism upon his later Christian life. For that matter, his Manichæism is easily traceable in his theology, but that did not concern me just then. Augustine the theologian repelled me as much as Augustine the mystic attracted me. Perhaps my hatred of Calvinism, of which he was the *fons et origo*,



made me do him less than justice in this respect. The fourteenth-century Friends of God were a gold mine to me. Eckhart I have never fully managed to grasp, it is true, but Tauler's sermons and the *Theologia Germanica* were a veritable treasure trove to me, and always will be. I have to thank Dean Inge, too, for putting me on the track of dear Mother Julian of Norwich, whose *Revelations of Divine Love* are a scheme of philosophy as well as an exceedingly beautiful type of spiritual testimony, though doubtless the last thing in the mind of the devout anchoress was to do any philosophising. Richard Rolle and George Fox come a long way second in my estimation. Jacob Behmen I found difficult and involved, but full of beauty and suggestiveness when I could understand him. But it was always Catholic saintship that spoke most directly to my heart. St. Bernard's prose works, St. Francis of Assisi, St. Francis de Sales, St. John of the Cross and his great fellow-mystic Teresa of Jesus, the two Catherines of Genoa and Siena, Madame Guyon and her friend and fellow-sufferer, Fénelon, allowing for the extravagances of the former of the two last-named, have all contributed in their several degrees to my religious life. My spirit knows no greater solace to this day than to kneel with them before the world's Redeemer and adore the goodness of God.

Here was the soil in which my monism grew. Carefully as the Catholic mystics maintain their orthodoxy, there can be no doubt, I think, that their language implies a view of the relations of the soul with God which transcends the limits of personality as ordinarily understood. Ecstasy, in so far as it is describable at all, is the temporary attainment of a state of consciousness for which no analogy exists in the intercourse of one human soul with another. Bounds are broken through, separateness disappears, life is immeasurably enhanced and glorified; and, without ceasing to be oneself, the soul becomes ineffably and mysteriously one with that which is the ground of all being, that which is as opposed to all that merely seems. Here I am, and here I rest. This is the background of my faith, the very sap and essence of it. Whatever else may have to be added by way of qualification or safeguard, this must remain. To abandon it would be to cease to be myself or to know the love that passeth knowledge and the truth that makes free.

## CHAPTER V

### MINISTRY IN BRIGHTON (*continued*)

MY theology during this period may be gathered from my book of sermons already mentioned, *A Faith for To-day*. It differs from the *New Theology* of seven years later mainly in the fact that the monistic basis thereof is not yet explicit. It has much the same negative view of evil, which after all is Augustinian, and the same theory of creation as a mode of the self-expression of God. The Neo-Hegelian origin of this idea has been noted above. I still cannot see that there is much wrong therewith. But it is stronger on sin and Atonement than the later volume, and is content to leave the latter a mystery. On the person of Christ it is orthodox as far as it goes. It distinguishes between moral and cosmical evil, attributing the former to man without saying how, and the latter to God. It shows too, as I think quite clearly, that moral consciousness only emerges in the conflict between desire and duty, and that the conditions which give rise to this conflict are not of our making but of divine ordinance. The doctrine of the

Fall is cursorily dealt with and treated psychologically rather than historically. My attitude to the question of miracle was less respectful then than now; I was much under the influence of the rationalising gospel criticism of the latter half of the nineteenth century.

In dogmatics at this time I read widely, but not to any great profit. Principal Fairbairn's *Place of Christ in Modern Theology* I felt to be a remarkable compendium of profound learning without much that was truly illuminating in its whole bulk, a judgment I have seen no reason to alter. His *Studies in the Life of Christ*, a much earlier work, was far more helpful to a preacher, though since largely superseded by the progress of New Testament criticism. His *Philosophy of the Christian Religion*, which appeared in 1902, attracted me more than either, partly because its style was so much less irritating—his previous works suffered from a habit of antithesis which he developed to excess, giving the reader, as it were, a box on one ear with the right hand and then on the other with the left, a method which is apt to pall when continued through chapter after chapter. In this book the antithesis was much less prominent. But my chief interest in it was that I wanted to see how to relate to theology the philosophical standpoint at which I was arriving. And this, I am afraid, I did not find. Like the rest of Dr.

Fairbairn's massive work, his *Philosophy of the Christian Religion* was a piling Pelion upon Ossa without striking any fire out of them. His mind was essentially of the acquisitive, not the creative order. There was little in his treatises specifically addressed to the mind of the age or that had not been said a thousand times before; the beaten track was carefully and minutely followed, but no fresh pathways were blazed or anything suggested to make the old easier to tread. And, with deep respect be it set down, I have to make almost the same confession about Dr. Dale. Not much in the way of enlightenment did I ever get from his famous book on the Atonement or from his *Living Christ and the Four Gospels*, the latter the far more human book of the two because born of a vital experience of his own. The fact is that distinctively Nonconformist—or shall I say evangelical?—theology failed me. If I am to be blamed for this I cannot help it: the truth is as stated. As a qualification I must record my great indebtedness to some evangelical writers outside England. A charmingly written manual of Christian doctrine from the pen of Dr. Clarke of Colgate University, U.S.A., I used for several sessions as a textbook for a lay preachers' class which I conducted in Brighton. It was exactly suited for the purpose, being erudite without being ponderous, and spiritual without losing anything in intellectual

force. Professors Marcus Dods of Edinburgh and A. B. Bruce of Glasgow were a great inspiration to me, the latter especially. Both were suspect of heresy, not perhaps without some justification. In recent years I have come to find much to admire in Dr. Denney, whom I should think no one living or dead has ever thought of accusing of heresy.

But to the degree that I was able to derive much benefit from systematic theology—Biblical criticism, as will be seen in due order, having made me somewhat impatient of it—it was to Anglicanism that I still turned most freely, not always for instruction, but certainly for interest. Liddon's Bampton Lectures on the *Divinity of our Lord* impressed me at the beginning of my ministry, though later on I came to see the critical difficulties they were unable to meet, of which indeed the author was quite unconscious. F. W. Robertson then as now was an unfailing stimulus: I have not outgrown my love for him. Dr. Gore I never ceased to follow, though afar off, and now with a deeper appreciation. J. R. Illingworth helped me greatly up to a point, especially by his valuable work on *Divine Immanence*. I happened to read Moberly's *Atonement and Personality* about the same time as Macleod Campbell's much older work on the same subject. The latter captured me, but the former opened vistas unseen by my Scottish namesake. The fact



that I found so much more in Macleod Campbell than in Dale may be considered another token of depravity in me by the rigidly orthodox, but I still have a great regard for him. Amongst transatlantic thinkers by whom I was influenced at this time Horace Bushnell and Theodore Parker must be specially mentioned. They carried me further along the path of a devout liberalism. I can never be sorry that I made the acquaintance of either, albeit their influence did not tend to make me more at home with evangelical orthodoxy. An American theologian of a younger generation, Professor Stevens of Yale, produced a book about a dozen years ago which has done much to clarify my thought on the Atonement, namely his *Christian Doctrine of Salvation*. While noting this I must not omit a reference to Oxenham's *Catholic Doctrine of the Atonement*, one of the sanest and most lucid accounts of the history of the subject ever given to the world. It has done much to guide me both in my earlier and later ministry. The author is one of the Roman Catholic scholars to whom I am under deep obligation, and was the first of them to make a permanent impression on my mind. Nothing in his book was inconsistent with my growing liberalism; in fact I thought at the time that it lent support to it without meaning to do so. It gave no solution of the outstanding problem of the nature of the



redemption wrought out for mankind in Christ; but if I had had eyes to see I might have seen that it demonstrated to the full the necessity for it while reverently allowing the innermost of the divine sacrifice to remain a mystery, a mystery and sacrifice continually renewed in the sacrament of the altar. The Atonement is fully intelligible only through the corporate life of the Church.

It should be recorded here that all through this part of my spiritual history I read continuously in the Fathers, particularly the Alexandrians. I followed no regular method in this branch of study, but did what I could at it in the intervals of the serious work of more immediate value in preparation for my pulpit. But I acquired a good deal in this way all the same; it was a field of study for which I had a liking, and I have maintained my acquaintance with it more or less ever since. Clement and Origen were my favourites, and, as will be readily inferred, they did nothing to check my liberalising tendencies. Tertullian I detested. His fierceness, intolerance, and utter mercilessness to those who differed from him were to me very repellent and accounted for much that was evil in Latin Christianity in its after history. Irenæus I put on a totally different footing as belonging to the East rather than the West, though the best of his life-work was done in Gaul. Tertullian's

African compatriot, Cyprian, I had a profound respect for, partly because of his character, but principally because of the firmness with which he resisted the claims of the Bishop of Rome to universal jurisdiction.

But from the first day I began my work in Brighton I began to submit myself to the influence of the Germans, more especially in the sphere of Biblical criticism. For fifteen years onward this was the source to which I looked—far too faithfully—for what I was to think about the Bible, and indirectly about the gospel too. I have read much more extensively in this field than in any other, and regret that I gave so much time to it—that is, in proportion to the whole. With the foolish things now being said about German scholarship I have no sympathy. The men who are telling us that the war has put an end to any credit it ever possessed, and that the British clergy who have sat at the feet of German savants must be sadly disillusioned, are simply talking nonsense. We may have been mistaken in assimilating so freely what the Germans have taught us, but that does not do away with the fact that the debt of Christendom to them is great. Much of their work will stand the test of time, and much will not. Sir William Ramsay has done invaluable service in exposing the unsoundness of mere literary speculation when brought up against the evidence of the

spade and mattock. The New Testament facts are considerably more trustworthy than a great deal of so-called scientific criticism of them has been wont to allow. What I regret is that I was not more cautious in accepting the latter. But the tendency of late among the principal authorities themselves is to become more conservative in their verdicts. The foremost of them all, Adolf Harnack, is a conspicuous example of this. When I recall the wild extremes to which some of the speculations of twenty years ago went I can but marvel at my own docility under their bold assertions; I believed them too readily, as did others. Professor Cheyne must be credited with a certain measure of responsibility for this among English readers. His Jerahmeel theory is only one instance out of many that might be adduced in illustration of his tendency to erect elaborate superstructures upon the flimsiest foundations. No one could call his scholarship in question, but his bias was always in the direction of denying the historicity of events, narratives, and personalities as presented in scripture. The plain meaning of anything was abhorrent to him; he must always hunt for the myth of which it was the embodiment. But this habit became rather serious when he put the *Encyclopædia Biblica* on the market as an authoritative work of reference for Bible students at large. Such a comprehensive accumulation

of learning ought to have contained only assured critical results, or at least have indicated plainly when the individual judgments advanced were open to doubt, whereas it did anything but that.

Let no one imagine that I am speaking disrespectfully of Dr. Cheyne's contributions to Biblical exegesis. I hope I come second to none of his admirers in deference to the scholar as well as love for the man; I am but recording my opinion of his effect upon my own reading in one great subject, and I think upon that of many other young men too. He introduced me to Schmiedel, for example—P. W. Schmiedel, I mean, author of the much-controverted article in the *Encyclopædia Biblica* in which we were left with only five gospel sayings which, according to this particular expert, might fairly be considered authentic and regarded as the foundation pillars for a really scientific life of our Lord. I read this writer's later defence in which he pointed out that he did not affirm these five sayings to be the only genuine ones relating to Jesus, but the ones about which we might be reasonably sure and from which a great deal more might be inferred. This was all very well, but it was not easy to say what more could be inferred from a few utterances which were selected as presumably authentic on the very ground that they deprecated supernatural claims on behalf

of the speaker, beginning with "Why callest thou me good? none is good, save one, that is, God." Schmiedel's book on the Johannine writings, with its penetrating analysis of the ingenious use of symbolism by the evangelist, formed for some time the basis—a false one, as I now perceive—of the distinction I was accustomed to draw between the latest gospel and the three earlier ones. The work I have done on the subject myself within the last few years has convinced me that this distinction is less radical than appears on the surface.

Harnack never greatly appealed to me, though I read him carefully. I toiled through his *History of Dogma* with the result that I acquired a considerable distaste for the subject, a distaste which Dr. Gore and Professor Swete have since done a good deal to correct. This massive piece of erudition is written throughout from the liberal Protestant standpoint—unconsciously in large measure—and this inevitably misleads the reader on some very important questions such as the constitution of the ministry. The author allows too much, as Dr. Wotherspoon has lately succeeded in showing, for the early predominance of the charismatic over the presbyteral ministry. It would be truer to say that this is the view advanced in his *Expansion of Christianity* than in the earlier work, but it receives prominence in both. His

*What is Christianity?* left but little of Christianity as a Catholic, or even an earnest evangelical, would understand it. And here let me remark upon one thing which has never ceased to be a puzzle to me. All these products of the prodigious learning of the eminent Berlin theologian have been extravagantly praised by the most orthodox theologians of this country; the same would apply to far less conservative writers than Professor Harnack; but what for the life of me I cannot understand is how these British reviewers could be so apparently satisfied with the kind of gospel they commended. The gospel of German liberal Protestantism as a whole, Harnack's not excluded, rationalises everything. Even when it does not explicitly say so it tacitly assumes the all-embracing humanity of our Lord—that is, it puts Him in the same category as other great religious masters. It leaves no room for mystery, none for the supernatural, little or nothing for the miraculous in any sphere.

Concurrently with Harnack I was reading two Frenchmen with much appreciation—J. Réville and Auguste Sabatier. The beautiful style of the latter made reading a delight, and perhaps blinded one to his sophisms. His *Religions of Authority and the Religion of the Spirit* had a profound influence upon my mind. I still believe it to be as succinct and lucid a statement as can be found of the only consistent alternative to



the Catholic position on the vital subject with which it deals. The same author's *Philosophy of Religion*, which I read first, is more fascinating than a good novel, and full of suggestiveness. There is no corresponding lightness of touch in any German writer of my acquaintance. Réville's *Liberal Christianity*, not a very large book, gave me an insight into a phase of continental religion of which I had hitherto known nothing.

Other German writers who influenced me much in my Brighton days were Weiss and Beyschlag on the life and teaching of our Lord. I have gone back to them of late in connection with the special piece of work I am doing in this field, and find it curious to note how the emphases of criticism have changed and how little the portrait of the Master as limned by these scholars can stand the test of the scepticism of Schweitzer and his school. Friedrich Delitzsch on the *Babel-Bible* issue interested me greatly, and with reason; the work he did has never been undone. Otto Pfleiderer did me some harm; his tendency to explain everything supernatural away by means of exceedingly questionable parallels derived from extra-Christian sources bothered me for a time, but I eventually broke free from it as from all anti-supernaturalism. Upon one point I have become finally and absolutely satisfied by rigorous experiment: Christianity



cannot be rationalised. What is most valuable in the revelation it brings and the benefit it affords is super-rational, hence its power.

Bousset's *Jesus* belongs to this period of my mental acquisitions, as also the much earlier and more famous treatises of Strauss and Rénan, together with Seeley's *Ecce Homo*. I was quite conscious of their charm and force without entirely yielding to either. As most of those acquainted with my ministry would be willing to admit, I never did wholly succumb to purely naturalistic explanations of the words and works of Him who is for all ages the Light of the World. I was glad to have Him humanised and made as vivid and alluring as possible to my devout apprehension without being in any degree a figure less commanding, mysterious, and divine. Strauss's revolutionary book has stood the test of time better than Rénan's, so far as the scientific character of its literary judgments is concerned, though doubtless Rénan will always be the more extensively read.

It might have been expected that I should have familiarised myself with the important contributions of Ferdinand Christian Baur and his contemporaries to scientific theology, but I did not. Nor did I do more than read English summaries of Ritschlianism. Probably I have lost by this omission, but I cannot spare time to make up for it now, more especially as the

principal theories put forward by these have been argued and re-argued, qualified and rejected by so many successive schools. We all know fairly well where to place them.

The above is but a meagre list of the authors who have influenced me more or less, especially during my Brighton and earlier London period. It indicates something of the equipment with which my London ministry began and the direction in which I was travelling. But a number of other writers might be named to whom I am under obligation, were it not for the necessity of confining myself strictly to the task of showing what were the main lines on which my thought developed and what were the principal guide-posts *en route*. I have omitted much of what constituted in the last few years of my Brighton work the main course of my study, namely Old and New Testament exegesis. I read hard and conscientiously in this field, and think I may fairly claim to know it pretty thoroughly. There is not much that is really important in the way of Biblical scholarship that I have missed. I ought certainly to acknowledge my indebtedness to Professors Driver and Sanday here. Both have been good enough to correspond with me on occasion in regard to particular points on which opinion was divided. The works of Principal George Adam Smith of Aberdeen University were amongst the earliest

which helped me in acquiring an acquaintance with Old Testament criticism, and I know none better for a preacher.

It was about this time, also, that I began to make acquaintance with Roman Catholic and Anglican Modernism. The two are quite distinct, but were more in touch a few years ago than most people were aware. Father Tyrrell came to see me once or twice, once at least in the company of an Anglican theologian of liberal views whose sympathy with and knowledge of the Roman movement was wide and accurate. Some of the Italian Modernists of their own accord began to write to me, and we corresponded freely for a time. With one or two of them I am still on intimate terms. The movement appeared to me full of promise and I was greatly attracted by it. It led me to pay more attention to the inner life of the Church of Rome than I had hitherto done, though it was not for some time yet that I took up the matter systematically. I wondered whether that venerable communion were about to renew its youth, as did many more throughout the world. One thing puzzled me, and that was the absence of a common standing ground among the Modernists themselves and their mutual inconsistencies, but as this was more or less true of liberalism everywhere, and I judged it to be practically inevitable in all new move-

ments, it did not trouble me greatly. Pope Pius X, as we all know, pronounced Modernism the synthesis of all heresies, and from this point of view perhaps he was right, though the encyclical in which his authoritative condemnation of it was contained was curiously immoderate in tone and specious in argument. Had the movement been more cohesive, and known better what it was aiming at, it might have defied suppression; as it was it tragically failed, for the time being at any rate.

Tyrrell did not attract me much personally, I hardly knew why. He was fervid and sincere, and the master of a style which alone would have sufficed to secure him a hearing in any part of the globe. But he did not seem to me to know well enough what he wanted, save and except that he was always "agin the Government," like so many of his compatriots in another sense. I question whether he was truly a Roman Catholic at all—I mean that he never learned obedience, which is of the very essence of the Roman system. His insubordination was not of recent date; it began with his very novitiate in the Jesuit order and continued practically all through the rest of his career. His valuable services to liberty of thought ought not to blind us to this fact. Indeed, now that I know more of his personal history, and more of the ecclesiasticism against which he strove, I

am astonished at the patience and forbearance with which he was treated till quite within the last few years of his life. It was, to say the least, a very questionable proceeding on his part to give his promise not to write and then continue to do so under a pseudonym. I have been struck, too, by his swift changes of front. I came across something of his on Lamennais in my early ministry which solemnly speculated as to whether there were any hope of that eminent iconoclast's ultimate salvation, and almost summed up against it. Yet within a comparatively short time Tyrrell himself had outdone Lamennais in his open disrespect for authority and determination to resist or evade the requirements of his ecclesiastical superiors. I felt this at the time I first got to know him, and have since been confirmed in my view that there was a good deal to be said for the official side of the question when the issues concerning him came to a head. He was a difficult person to manage or be sure of at any time. The provincial superior of the Society of Jesus who at the close of his novitiate advised him not to take the vows was undoubtedly right in his discernment of Tyrrell's tendencies, and almost uncannily prescient in warning him that he would be sure to give trouble to the society afterwards.

Moreover, I do not think it could truly be said that Tyrrell contributed anything positive

to theology. His work was almost entirely negative, though brilliant at that, and much of it deadly in effect. Perhaps this characterisation is hardly fair. It may be held, probably with justice, that such work as he had opportunity to do could not be anything but critical, and that in happier circumstances his great powers of mind would have found more congenial occupation in constructive thinking. I doubt this, however. He had all the Celtic quickness and fertility of imagination, but something of Celtic instability likewise. He could and did assimilate rapidly the thoughts of others and reproduce them with a glow and force the original did not possess. But he was apt to be vague and elusive on crucial points, and—I may be wrong—I think this was because he was not quite sure of himself. This is illustrated by the last book he ever wrote, which showed clearly that he had just been reading Schweitzer and was dominated for the moment accordingly by eschatological conceptions of our Lord's earthly ministry and its outcome. A question forced upon the reader's mind all through, but never answered from the first page to the last, is whether Tyrrell himself thought our Lord a deluded visionary or not. His words would almost suggest that he did, for he enters no protest against Schweitzer's main argument, but by inference adopts it as his own. I have



been given to understand by those who knew the author better than I that this same book was written partly against me, and partly against liberal Protestantism in general, in order to demonstrate that Roman Modernism was not a Protestantising movement. I think this was a just claim. There was a certain kinship in spirit between the two, and I myself, like many others, was inclined to identify them, but Tyrrell's book made me see that this could not properly be done. Probably he and his associates had been feeling the inconvenience of being credited with Protestant sympathies. I freely admit, too, that this book helped to show me the impossibility of maintaining my own position just then without definitely allying myself with the old, bare, arid liberalism against which Newman so earnestly strove. It never was mine.

Loisy I read with close interest and appreciation, but never with any failure to perceive the fact that he was an intellectual, not a spiritual force. I am not in the least surprised at what has happened to him since; it was only what might have been expected. His interests are entirely on the intellectual plane, and it is on that plane that we are his beneficiaries. His *Religion of Israel* and *Gospel and the Church* are both of first-class value; the latter especially I welcomed as giving me a totally different viewpoint from that of Harnack in regard to the



apostolic and sub-apostolic age. Baron von Hügel, whose acquaintance I shortly afterwards made, is the third great Roman Catholic of Modernist views whose writings have influenced me, and they still have a considerable hold upon me. He is to my mind the most distinguished of the Modernist group in this country, and as remarkable for spiritual force as for scholarship. The kind of Modernism he represents may be driven underground, but it can never perish. Nor is it aggressive and disputatious in tone, almost the opposite, in fact. If the Modernists who have drifted into agnosticism, as so many of them unfortunately have since the promulgation of the papal decrees against them, could only have come under the spiritual influence of men like von Hügel, the movement would have had a very different fate. Those who suppose it to be finished with, however, are very much mistaken, as I can testify from my own personal knowledge, though it is better to name no names as things are at present.

The late Wilfrid Ward was another Roman Catholic whom I am glad to have known. My acquaintance with him began before I left Brighton, but it was not until I had been some time in London that I really got to appreciate him. He combined, perhaps more than any one I have yet come across, the modern habit of mind with a reverent consideration for authority

in the fullest sense. He moved easily and familiarly in both spheres. I met him occasionally in a little private society to which we both belonged, and learned to admire him greatly. His defence of the principle of authority was more ingenious than convincing. He held that as we are accustomed to recognise the authority of experts in every other field, so we ought to admit them in that of religion; and that humanity requires a special organ of religion to test and pronounce upon the judgments of experts, just as it requires a special organ for the maintenance of social order and the like. He forgot or failed to note that this line of argument would prove too much. Authority as thus defined is neither more nor less than an appeal to right reason or cumulative spiritual experience, and does not claim supernatural sanctions. It is not identical with authority in the Roman sense.

This account of my Brighton development should not be closed without some reference to my interests in political and social matters. Up to the time of leaving Oxford I had never had anything much to do with the working classes as such, and I understood but little of social problems and the condition of the poor. The Christian Social Union had just been formed by the Lux Mundi school of Oxford men, and I attended its meetings and took some little part

therein, but I really had not time as an undergraduate to go very deeply into the questions thus brought to our attention. I read the *Fabian Essays*, and they opened my eyes to the nature of the evil we were out to combat, but then and for many years afterwards I went but little further in the direction they advocated. Bellamy's *Looking Backward* was the first of many Utopias (except More's own) that have come under my notice and stimulated my thought as years have passed. This able book formed the basis of some of our discussions at Oxford, and I still regard it as on the whole the clearest and most suggestive forecast of the socialised State that has been given to the world. With Henry George's masterpiece, *Progress and Poverty*, I did not make acquaintance till a much later date. I will defy any one to acquire a thorough grasp of the case set forth in that remarkable book without being profoundly influenced thereby. It has had a great deal to do with shaping the legislation of the author's distinguished namesake, Mr. Lloyd George, since 1906, unless report speaks falsely. An enthusiastic supporter of Mr. Henry George, the late Mr. Joseph Fels, an American millionaire who devoted his life and wealth to the furtherance of the ideas contained in *Progress and Poverty*, once told me that he regarded Mr. Lloyd George as the statesman destined to realise for civilisa-

tion at large the dream of the total abolition of penury by the taxation of land values. It remains to be seen how far this confident prediction represents the truth. There is little prospect of it now; its author did not reckon with the great war.

*The Bitter Cry of Outcast London* was being loudly voiced during my time at Oxford, and the University Settlement movement had begun. The name of Arthur Toynbee was on every lip in this connection. Oxford House, Bethnal Green, had been started with James Adderley, the present Dean of Durham, and the present Bishop of London at its head in succession to each other. There is some ostensible justification for Canon Adderley's playful claim to have been the means of bringing these eminent associates of his into note. Mr. Percy Alden, now a Member of Parliament, and for twenty years my very good friend, represented Non-conformity as Warden of the Mansfield House University Settlement, Canning Town. If there be one man in England who knows from continuous first-hand experience the needs of the poor and the best ways of meeting them it is Mr. Alden. We had also our own Christ Church mission, supported by the college, which is still doing excellent work in a London slum neighbourhood. High were the hopes entertained in the 'nineties concerning the University Settle-

ment movement, the bringing of the best educated youth of the nation into direct contact with the poorest of the poor by sending them to live among them. Great was the enthusiasm evoked thereby, but it is to be feared that the good results of the effort have not been commensurate with the hopes of its promoters. The causes of the evil lie too deep for any single remedy to effect a very great change for the better, as the Fabians have told us from the first.

Mr. Bernard Shaw, then little known to fame, came up to Oxford and addressed a meeting or two during my time there, together with Mr. Sidney Webb and several more of the members of the newly created Fabian Society. The undergraduates made great sport of them after their wont. Mr. Shaw would have a very different reception now. I believe I am right in saying that one gentleman belonging to the deputation was forcibly deprived of his wig, and had to go back to town without it. I do not know any Fabian who wears a wig, so perhaps the story is apocryphal. I do know, however, that when Mr. Keir Hardie and a few of his associates, representing the Independent Labour Party, then in its infancy, came up to address a meeting to explain their policy to a University audience, they were insulted, mobbed, and finally ducked. This disgraceful method of dealing with the exponents of unpopular causes was all too

common at that time in Oxford—and other times too, for that matter.

I was not drawn to unite myself to either of these new parties, nor did I understand much about them. My knowledge of the social situation so far was very perfunctory; I had yet to learn at first hand the bare rudiments of it. What books could teach me of the dismal science I knew; I had to pass searching examinations therein. Mill, Adam Smith, and Ricardo were my accepted sources of instruction; I was far from having arrived at the stage of distrusting both their methods and conclusions as I do now and have done for many years. Their economic man has never existed any more than Jeremy Bentham's man whose principal motive in life is to seek pleasure and avoid pain; and their economic laws are only laws as long as society chooses and no longer. I was thoroughly familiar with the Social Contract theory, though I think I saw its weakness from the first; was learned in Rousseau, Montesquieu, and all that ilk; knew Locke and Sir Henry Maine; followed Dicey and Cunningham. But I knew nothing of the destitute England at my doors. For my degree course I had to work through the principal authorities on English constitutional and social history, and therefore was made to envisage the problem of want and destitution afar off. I knew more about Justinian than I did about



General Booth and *Darkest England*, and could have given a better account of Alfred's laws and the reason for them, or the constitution of the Saxon folk-moot and the mediæval manor, than of the modern demand of the proletariat for better housing and a living wage. Still, I would not have it imagined that I was wholly ignorant of these matters or indifferent to the issues to which they gave rise. It was impossible to be within the orbit of Dr. Gore and Pusey House without feeling the great responsibilities that had to be faced by the Church thereupon. I knew well enough that they had to be taken seriously. What I did not see was that this must mean the organised action of the entire Commonwealth, and that nothing short of that would really meet the case. I know now that what is wanted is the reconstitution of society from top to bottom under the inspiration of Christian ideals, and that economic laws are only tolerable as the expression of those ideals. Where Christ and industrial methods come into conflict the Christian must make no truce with the latter.

During my ministry in Brighton I gradually became keener upon the social question, but was not yet prepared to adopt the Collectivist remedy for our economic ills. I was not much of a politician, but frequently appeared on the Liberal platform along with other Nonconformists. I was several times asked to stand for Parliament,

and I dare say I should have been member for Brighton at this moment had I acceded to Lord Gladstone's request to contest that constituency. I am thankful I did not. It would have taken me away from my true vocation in life and plunged me into activities for which I had no predilection and perhaps but little aptitude.

## CHAPTER VI

### EARLY DAYS IN LONDON : THE LABOUR MOVEMENT

AT the beginning of May 1903 I entered upon my duties as minister of the City Temple, though, as aforesaid, my continuous connection with that great church dates from the October previous. In October 1915 I preached my last sermon there, so that my London ministry covers a period of exactly thirteen years. It was a strenuous period, far too much so for my frail constitution, and was marked by no small amount of pain, conflict, and misunderstanding which I was ill-fitted by nature to bear. But for the constant and unvarying fealty of my people, and the touching consideration they always showed me, I should have resigned my charge at least ten years before I eventually did so. Public life has never had any charms for me. It is safe to say that but for the attachment of the City Temple congregation and my feeling of responsibility for its welfare I should have left Nonconformity, and perhaps withdrawn from the pulpit altogether, as early as 1905. This

was the one bond that held me, but it was a strong one. My Brighton doctor gave me five years to live if, as he said, I were foolish enough to accept the call to London and plunge into the maelstrom of life in the very centre thereof. He proved to be a little out in his reckoning, but only because I dwelt so much aloof from the wear and tear of public and social activities. For a public man I think I have managed to secure more privacy than any of my contemporaries known to me; it was the only way in which I could stand the strain of my work at all and keep going.

The start was auspicious enough. All denominations vied with each other in the welcome they gave me to the metropolis. Many societies, religious and other, passed resolutions of greeting and good-will in my endeavour to bend the bow of Ulysses. I was elected president of I know not how many of them and a member of as many more, and had courteously but firmly to refuse them all, on the ground that I must have time to discover my bearings and learn what I could and could not do. Many kind things were said and written, little or nothing unfriendly, not a few unctuously flattering and quite untrue. A sort of mythology gathered around my name. Piles of nonsense were published concerning my doings, tastes, and proclivities, sometimes to the disgust of my friends, oftener to their

amusement. Throughout my career, for the sake of my own peace I have followed the simple rule of not reading these lucubrations, and have not heard about them oftener than I could help. But all told I was launched upon the sea of a London ministry with every circumstance of honour and regard that could be shown to a Nonconformist preacher, and most of it genuine beyond doubt. I could have had anything I desired that it was in the power of my co-religionists to bestow had I cared about it and avoided rousing antagonism. The warning, "Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you," seemed specially applicable to my case. The day of my induction at the City Temple was one long to be remembered. The Church of England was represented by my old friend Canon Fleming and Canon Hensley Henson, then rector of St. Margaret's, Westminster. Lord Kinnaird presided at the evening meeting. Most of the principal Nonconformist leaders of England were present and took part in the proceedings. Messages by the hundred were received from every part of the globe. Bishops, deans, and other dignitaries of the Established Church joined with representatives of my own and other communions far and near in their expression of hope that the blessing of God would ever attend my service in the larger sphere to which I had now been bidden by

divine mandate. One of the kindest of these Anglican greetings came in the form of an autograph letter from Prebendary Carlile of the Church Army, the first of a number since received at intervals from the same source. Whenever anything special happens to me I am sure to get a letter from Mr. Carlile written with his own hand and breathing brotherly sentiments. How he finds time to do it I cannot imagine. He is a rebuke and a confusion to me in the matter, for I know I cannot spare the time requisite for conducting my correspondence on such generous lines. It appears to be his practice, or so I assume, to keep an eye on the doings of all his friends far and near, and to write to them at once to congratulate them in joy and condole with them in sorrow. May he long live to continue it.

It may be that some of those present on the occasion specified may remember certain words of my own in acknowledging all this goodness at the close of the series of meetings which began in the morning and concluded late in the evening. I said I had a misgiving that the time might come when the universal chorus of praise to which I was being all too generously treated would be changed to blame; that I thought it hardly possible that a man could do his duty in such a station without running the risk of unpopularity; and that if such a time did come I



hoped at least to retain the respect and forbearance of those who might feel obliged to differ from me. The observation passed without attracting any particular notice; it was only what any newly inducted minister might be expected and feel bound to say. But I was conscious of the misgiving, and somewhat uneasy under the torrent of kindness that was being poured out so lavishly.

The first sign of trouble was a public difference with Dr. Clifford on the subject of the shortcomings of the Church of England. The Education controversy was in full blast at the moment of my coming to London, and at a Liberation Society meeting shortly afterwards the doctor made a vigorous onslaught upon the Church as a whole and the Bishops in particular, the audience getting more and more excited as he went on, till at length it was almost in a state of frenzy at the supposed iniquities its venerated chief was with burning eloquence denouncing. The climax of the speech was a rhetorical period in which the orator repudiated the accusation that Nonconformity was jealous of the privileged position of the Establishment. "Jealous of a Church," he cried, "which makes common cause with the landlords, and whose representatives in Parliament and out of it vote down every measure of popular reform! Jealous of a Church whose proudest alliance is with the beer-barrel!" and

more in the same strain.<sup>1</sup> It was a tremendous indictment, delivered with all the energy and passion imaginable. But the beer-barrel part was too much for me, and I rose and objected to it. I said that the vicious yell with which the passage was greeted showed that it did no good either to the cause at issue or the audience itself, and only served needlessly to embitter discussion. Besides, it was not true. Leaving Kingsley and Maurice out of account, I could name a dozen prominent Anglicans straight off who had done more for social reform than almost any Nonconformist, however eminent; and as for Temperance legislation, it owed not a little to more than one Bishop of my acquaintance whose influence was thrown entirely on the side of total abstinence. The protest was received in chilly silence; it was like a cold douche upon a roaring flame. The enthusiasm which had mounted so high five minutes before was extinguished by my remarks. In addressing myself to the general question I took the line that the Church could not be bludgeoned into disestablishing herself, that it was bad for religion to attempt to carry disestablishment in the teeth of the opposition of the Church, and by insisting

<sup>1</sup> If my memory does not play me false the closing words of the doctor's thrilling peroration on this occasion were: "Awake, arise, or be for ever fallen!"—Satan's apostrophe to the fallen angels in *Paradise Lost*!

that the Church was a failure and a secularised institution. I reminded my hearers that there was a growing party in the Church which, while not necessarily regarding the connection between Church and State as a bad thing, was prepared to demand complete autonomy for the former in spiritual matters; and I urged that the Liberation Society, true to its name and purpose as originally avowed, should seek to make common cause with that party and lift the whole subject to the very highest spiritual level. I think I am right in saying that the speech was afterwards printed and circulated by the Society. I still believe the method thus advocated to be the only one whereby the very grave and important matter of the "Liberation of Religion from State Patronage and Control" should ever be approached.

But I was never forgiven by militant Nonconformists for dissociating myself from Dr. Clifford in the manner above described. God knows I had no intention of being disrespectful to him or any one else, but I knew, as most of that demonstrating assembly could not know, the other side of the case; and remembering the immensity of my own debt to saintly prelates as far as possible removed from the description Dr. Clifford was giving of their order, I could not in honesty and sincerity allow the occasion to pass without some attempt to correct what had been said.

Like the great-heart that he was, the person most immediately concerned never exhibited the faintest resentment against me because of it, and I am sure never felt any.

The next notable event, so far as I was personally concerned, was the working-man dispute of 1904. In an article in the *National Review* on the Sunday question I animadverted on the habits of large sections of the working classes, particularly with regard to drink and the selfish pursuit of pleasure. I pointed out the danger of the rapidly growing spirit of insubordination and fractious irresponsibility which characterised so much of the relations of operatives with the firms employing them. Echoing Ruskin, I remarked the comparative absence of joy in labour or of desire to do good work for its own sake. Idleness and dissoluteness, I said, were plainly on the increase, the main object of the workers in general being apparently to do as little work for as much pay as possible, regardless of the deleterious effect this practice was having on the national welfare and our standing in the world.

The newspapers, as was quite natural, detached this piquant paragraph from its context and published it broadcast. A storm of protest instantly arose which raged for weeks and bade fair to make me the bogey-man of the non-churchgoing masses. The fact that I was writing

on Sunday observance escaped their attention, even if indeed they ever knew it. All they knew was that I had assailed the British working man, and they resented it furiously. I had criticised the rich week-enders too, but that also was forgotten or ignored. Amongst other signs of the times I had mentioned Mr. Balfour's Sunday golf. I happened to be lunching with Mr. Balfour at Downing Street one day shortly afterwards, while the champions of the injured working man were still pounding away at me in the Press, and found him highly amused. He maintained that in all fairness he, too, ought to be allowed to rise in his wrath and come round and demonstrate against me in front of the City Temple.

The matter ended as suddenly as it began. I was invited to attend a meeting summoned by the executive of the London Trades Council and repeat and justify my observations in the presence of an assembly of representatives of the working men themselves. I went, and we parted good friends. I was heartily cheered at the very outset of the proceedings—which was a characteristically British way of giving a welcome to an opponent—and still more at the finish, when some of the horny-handed sons of toil insisted on carrying me to my carriage shoulder high. It was the only occasion on which a compliment of this kind was ever paid me, and I am more than willing that it should remain such ; it was

a somewhat disconcerting experience. The mob in the streets, which did not know what had been passing inside, made an ugly rush at me, and a free fight took place between my stalwart bodyguard of Trades Unionists and my would-be chastisers, in the course of which a paving-stone was thrown through the carriage window. I sustained no other damage from the encounter.

I mention the above episode because it had the consequence of bringing me into touch with the Labour movement for the first time, and changed my outlook on the social question. When face to face with the workers I was impressed by the fact that not one of them seriously attempted to dispute the accuracy of my indictment; what they resented was that it should have been made by one not of their own order, one who had never shared the hardships of the workers' lot. Mr. John Burns had said as much as I in the way of fault-finding, and said it more often, but he spoke from within, whereas I spoke from without; he had been fighting their battle all along, I had never done so. Mr. Keir Hardie was present at the meeting referred to, but did not speak. I had met him once before in Brighton when the Penrhyn quarrymen sent a deputation to the town to ask for help in raising funds to maintain their cause and support their wives and children during their struggle with Lord Penrhyn. Feeling they



were in the right, I acceded to their request to take the chair at their meeting in the Dome. They were also entertained at Union Church, and it was Mr. Keir Hardie who was their chief spokesman on the occasion. Beyond this isolated instance I had not had much opportunity of acquiring a knowledge of social conditions from the workers' point of view until and after the special gathering convened by the London Trades Council at which I was both critic and guest. I had some conversation with Mr. Hardie before and after the meeting, and we arranged to meet again and discuss the various points at issue in private and with more time to spare. Soon afterwards I went to see him, and from that time forward we remained on terms of friendship. A year or two later under his influence I joined the Independent Labour Party, and am still a member of it. I have a great respect for Mr. Hardie's memory. He was one of the most unselfish and high-minded men I ever met, and possessed genuine elements of greatness. There was something leonine about his very appearance, and his character was cast in a massive mould. Nothing mean or despicable could ever be laid to his charge; he was innocent of the tricks and wiles by which many politicians are said to elbow their way to success. His native abilities were so great that he could easily have raised himself out of his class had he chosen,

but it was a matter of principle with him never to do so. He was more vilely abused and scorned than any Labour leader of his time, and never came to his own except in the love and esteem of the poor and lowly whose battle he so nobly and consistently fought till death took him. He feared neither man nor devil, and his uncompromising ruggedness of speech, therefore, often led to his being misunderstood and disliked where a little more of *suaviter in modo* would have won him admiration and regard. It was a pity, for instance, that he should invariably have met King Edward's advances with curt rudeness, for King Edward always had an eye for a true man, and could not have failed to appreciate Hardie's good qualities if the rough-spoken apostle of social justice had only given him a chance. Few men have ever made so deep an impression upon my mind and heart.

It is not generally known, I think, that he had religious susceptibilities, though very critical of the Churches as institutions whose influence for the most part was thrown on the side of the established order. In his early days he had been a lay preacher, and in that capacity preached a sermon which none who heard it are ever likely to forget. His text was, "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow." "How do they grow?" asked the preacher. "Plant them in good soil, and allow them plenty of fresh air and

sunshine, and you will see. Not Solomon in all his glory was arrayed like one of these. But put them down at the bottom of a pit shaft in darkness and coal-dust, and how will they grow then? Neither glory nor grace will they display, nor will their feeble existence last for long." The application of the sermon threw unaccustomed light upon the Saviour's meaning. "There is plenty in the world for all if we would only help each other to it, or at least abstain from getting in each other's way. God's bounty is generous enough; it is man's selfishness that limits it and keeps it away from starving mouths."

Probably Hardie was greater as a prophet than he ever would have been as a statesman. But he was a great man all the same, and I shall ever be glad to have known him. It is one of the queer things of life that up to the end he should have been despised and sneered at by the dominant classes in the State, while his friend and quondam pupil, Mr. Hughes, Prime Minister of Australia, should now be hailed by these same classes as a veritable Daniel come to judgment and the hope of the future federated British Commonwealth. There is not much doubt that the war broke Hardie's heart and hastened his end. He saw in it the undoing of his life-work and the destruction of his dream of internationalism based upon a comity of the workers throughout the world.

For some years subsequent to the above-described passage at arms with the representatives of the workers I did what I could to serve them by speaking on Labour platforms. I was freely asked to do so, and given a warm welcome wherever I appeared under Labour auspices. I felt it to be a divine call to do my utmost in furthering the association of religion with the social movement. It seemed to me then, and seems to me still, a mistake to allow any antagonism to exist between them; and that there was distinct danger of such antagonism every one will admit. The wage-earners were becoming increasingly class conscious, but at the same time less friendly to Christianity as represented by the churches. Attacks on the latter were frequent both orally and in print when Labour grievances were being ventilated and Labour aspirations defined. A strong, determined, and sustained attempt was made to assimilate the whole Labour movement to Continental Socialism, even up to the point of rendering it atheistic in tone and temper. That this attempt did not succeed is due mainly to the different quality of the leadership of organised Labour in Great Britain as compared with the Continent. Men like Mr. Henderson and Mr. Ramsay Macdonald are far from considering it their duty to identify Labour interests with opposition to Christianity. Mr. Blatchford and

his school failed in their object: the British Labour movement is not atheistic, and never will be. On the contrary, Labour and the Church—using the latter term in the widest sense it will bear—are getting to understand each other better every year. The social consciousness has awakened within the Church, and Labour has come to appreciate the fact. But for the war I firmly believe we should ere now have witnessed a great advance in mutual confidence and co-operation on the part of the churches as a whole with Labour as a whole. The charges which used to be made against the former were in the main true. They did neglect their duty to the unprivileged, did allow charity—and not too much of that—to usurp the place of justice, did defend and were content to profit by a social system largely anti-Christian and unethical in its standards. The truth was that the Christian Church had not adjusted itself rightly to the moral problems created by modern industrialism, and has barely done so yet. But it was rapidly in process of doing so in the last few years up to the middle of 1914. Lloyd George legislation would have been unthinkable a decade earlier. I ask my readers to note the remarkable fact that in this country there is no such mistrust and opposition between the Church and the pioneers of social reform as exists elsewhere, and also to carry their memories back

ten or fifteen years and recall the bitter things that were then being widely said on Labour platforms concerning the supineness of the Church in presence of the wrongs and sufferings of the poor, and the indifference of churchgoers generally to the fight for better conditions. A great change has taken place in the interval, a change surely for the better. I had my small share in bringing it about, as I have been repeatedly assured by responsible persons on both sides; and this is a piece of work on which I look back with thankfulness. Let it not be supposed that I lay claim to any great credit in this connection. Other men have worked far harder and longer, and to much better effect.

But I could not continue to take an active part in Labour affairs, much as I should have liked to do so, and important as I still feel the work to be. Health, as usual, began to give way under the double strain of pulpit and platform. I got warning after warning of which the public knew nothing, until at length, after my visit to America in 1911, I had to withdraw from the platform altogether by medical orders. I seldom appear on a platform now, and am not likely to do so very much in future. But I follow the Labour movement with as great a sympathy as ever, and pray God that the present devastating war may not lead to a



violent set-back of the hopes and aims of those who lead it. I have often said, and I here repeat and emphasise the statement, that if I were in search of moral passion to-day I should know where to look : one would not need to go further than an ordinary gathering of the members of the Independent Labour Party. Petulant they may be, critical of their leaders, and impatient of control ; but for sheer unselfish devotion to a cause, and willingness to toil and sacrifice for it, they are unsurpassable. It always used to warm my heart to gaze at the bright, eager young fellows who constituted the majority of such assemblies. The fire of idealism burned strong within them and glowed in their faces. The crudeness of many of their opinions, and the acerbity with which they frequently expressed them, did not blind me to this. Willingly would I have wrought with them all my days, but I had finally to choose between them—or rather between their particular enthusiasm—and my vocation as a preacher. It had to be one or the other ; it could not be both for long ; and I knew the one by which I ought to abide.

It has been a matter of deep regret to me that the Independent Labour Party, led by Messrs. Ramsay Macdonald and Philip Snowden, should have been so strongly opposed to Great Britain entering the war, even on behalf of Belgium, and should as time has gone on have taken a

more and more uncompromising attitude on the question. But this is attributable to the very idealism just mentioned, and should be so regarded. Many conscientious objectors have come from its ranks. But men who are capable of taking such a stand, at such personal loss and risk, for what they conceive to be the cause of righteousness, are good material for the State; and when the war is over we shall need it sorely. On the other hand, when they write to me to insist, as some of them habitually do, that the priest is once more at his old game of preaching blood and slaughter, I would take leave to remind them that no priest to my knowledge is doing anything of the sort. The Christian ministers who believe their country to be in the right in the present contest are not preaching war. They hate war as much as the extremest conscientious objector could possibly do. Who does not hate war? But we believe that war was in this case unavoidable if our nation was to be saved from dishonour, and all that we hold most dear, including our dreams of a nobler and happier Commonwealth, from destruction. By and by, please God, we shall gather up the broken threads, and begin to weave anew the fabric of international amity that has been torn in pieces by Prussian militarism and all its evil concomitants. Then, and not till then, will our hopes of a world-wide social democracy have a

chance of being realised. Perhaps the present breakdown of those hopes, by the defection of German Socialism from the cause of universal brotherhood to that of a domineering nationalism allied to brute force, will lead to a higher and more spiritual conception of what is to be gained thereby in the end.

Whether I am still a member of the Fabian Society I cannot say. It depends, I suppose, upon whether I have paid my subscription for the current year, which is extremely doubtful. On the other hand, it is possible that I may have paid it twice over, a thing I not infrequently do with my multifarious obligations of a like character. I was invited to become a Fabian soon after I began to take an active interest in economic problems from the Labour standpoint, and did so. To know Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Webb is a liberal education in itself; and no small part of the very considerable achievements of the Fabian Society, not only in influencing public opinion but in getting things done, must be placed to the credit of this remarkable pair. Mr. Bernard Shaw I had met frequently before, and we have always been on excellent terms. He is of course much more than the prophet of Fabianism, but he is certainly that. Consciously or unconsciously, the Society takes its tone from him. It is desperately clever, merciless in criticism of its own members and every-

body else, and pretends to be without sentiment whereas it is nothing of the kind. It has what the late Professor Seeley called "the enthusiasm of humanity," but it would not be less effective if it showed it a little more. I should think no society in proportion to its numbers has done so much in the way of influencing legislation; many are the Fabian proposals which have passed into law. The members pride themselves on this, as well they may. They are a highly superior set of people, and know it thoroughly. Lest they should be exalted overmuch in their own esteem, I append the following anecdote to the respectful testimony I have felt bound to pay to their power and repute. Some years ago—about seven or eight, I think—Sir Oliver Lodge wrote to me to say that he had been asked by the Fabian Society to allow an address of his on national expenditure to appear as one of their tracts. "What on earth is the Fabian Society?" inquired the famous scientist. "Can you tell me anything about it?" Hide your diminished heads, ye instructors of statesmen and inspirers of Acts of Parliament. Here is at least one man of eminence who had never heard of you and your impressive doings, and had never read a Fabian tract till he wrote one himself. Still, I hope every Fabian would be satisfied with the answer I gave to Sir Oliver's interrogation. I said: "The Fabian Society

consists of intellectuals who may also be described as aristocratic socialists.”

While writing about Fabianism I must not omit to mention two excellent works which I have read with much profit and appreciation—*Human Nature in Politics*, by Mr. Graham Wallas, and the *Prevention of Destitution*, by Mr. and Mrs. Webb. For thoroughness of treatment and practical suggestiveness each is in its way of the highest order. Mr. Wallas’s book is unique. It covers a field economists have hitherto for the most part been content to ignore.

But I am no politician, and am quite devoid of the desire to shine on committees or in the Councils of State. My one and only motive for mixing myself up with such questions as those with which the Fabian Society and the Independent Labour Party were formed to deal is my compassion for the lot of the poor and down-trodden. I am convinced that our present materialistic civilisation is largely a failure because it exalts the machine at the expense of the man. It can give no coherent account of itself. If one were to ask what the purpose of civilisation is nowadays there could be no obvious and ready answer—none, at any rate, that could be expressed in terms of the spirit. We have been for so long engaged in exploiting the material resources of the world we live in that

we have largely forgotten to inquire for what life itself is given us. As Alfred Russel Wallace points out in his book *The Wonderful Century*, civilised man has made a greater advance in the acquirement of power over nature during the last fifty years or so than during the two thousand years preceding. To what has it all come? Has there been anything like a commensurate moral advance, or even an appreciable increase in the sum of human happiness? It may be gravely doubted. The war is the Nemesis of our vain imaginings. We have pursued material good with a zest and whole-hearted absorption unprecedented in the history of the race, and now that very aptitude is destroying us. Science has turned "procuress to the lords of hell," and is filling the world with grief and despair. Never was such devilish ingenuity expended in the business of killing and maiming men as now; never were its fell effects so widespread and altogether appalling in their fiendishness. Truly, as Dr. Richard Glover of Bristol said many years ago, there is something sinister about civilisation.

What I came to see with clear vision ten years ago was that our civilisation bore hardly on the toiler. The wage system gave us the slum, the factory, the phenomenon of unemployment, the enslavement of the many for the benefit of the few. I saw that the habitual



assumption that somehow all this was in the natural order of things and incurable was untrue. It became obvious to me that charity would not meet the case, and that our various Poor Law agencies were so many palliatives for a disease which was rooted in the social system itself and ought to be got out. What was needed was that we should stop our mad rush for money-getting and begin to live, that we should do on less and distribute it more fairly, that instead of a few owning all the means of life and making the others work for them, we should own the means of life in common and each do our part in the task of production. In other words, I learned that the radical cure for our economic ills was not to be sought in almsgiving and workhouses, but in the substitution of the principle of co-operation for that of competition. I blamed the Church (including myself) for being so slow to discern that this was the true Christian solution of the complicated problem of hopeless poverty and all the degradation so commonly associated therewith. I still feel that we are much to blame, but I feel in addition that the root of the problem is one of morals, and not of social arrangements only or chiefly. It is a matter of the human will as of old, the individual and collective will, that makes or mars a people's destiny. The best social system that could be devised would fail without a

socialised general consciousness to work it. That is what is lacking, the mind that thinks and feels in terms of the whole. The social ideal and the Christian ideal are the same, only the latter goes further. As I have more than once observed from the pulpit, perfect socialism and perfect anarchy are one, namely, the service which is perfect freedom. But this can never be imposed from without, it has to be expressed from within, the revealing of the love which seeketh not its own.

In the early days of my association with the Labour movement I was inclined to take platform denunciations of the shortcomings of the Church at their face value. I know better now. When working men tell me that they do not go to church because they are disgusted with the way in which the clergy have truckled to the capitalist, or because they are alienated by the nonsense talked from the pulpit, I remain unimpressed. I used to believe those things, and I still admit that there may be a modicum of truth in them, but not very much. The reasons for the decline of attendance at public worship, and indeed of interest in organised Christianity, not only on the part of the working classes but of all other classes, are to be sought in a different quarter. I do not observe that working men attend the churches wherein the clergy are sympathetic with their aspirations in

greater numbers than they attend other churches. Some of the most devoted and self-sacrificing of the socialist clergy preach every Sunday to empty benches; the workers will listen to them on the platform but not in the pulpit, applaud them when they talk politics but do not care to hear them talk religion. Nor is it their theology which is to blame. We are no abler than our creed-making forefathers—far from it; the average man simply cannot follow a sustained argument in pulpit or Press to-day; he is so accustomed to being fed with snippets and spicy paragraphs that he has lost the faculty of concentrating attention on serious subjects for long together. If proof be needed of the fact that theology has nothing to do with the fulness or emptiness of a church it is readily forthcoming. It is all a question of the personality of the man in the pulpit. If he be a good speaker and otherwise interesting in himself he will have plenty of hearers. He can preach what he likes, doctrinally I mean, and his congregation will listen. If, on the other hand, he has no popular gifts he may be the possessor of all the wisdom of all the ages, but will be left to waste his sweetness on the desert air. That is a fact beyond dispute. It is not theology, good or bad, old or new, sound or unsound, that keeps people away from church or draws them to it. They care nothing about theology; it would be better

if they did; what they care about is being interested. There is no greater delusion than to suppose, as so many of us have done from time to time, that the modern man is repelled from religious observance by what he is required to believe. Experience compels me to affirm that it is not the difficulty of squaring Christianity with modern science that is in question, but rather the difficulty of squaring its ethical precepts with the requirements of industrial and commercial practice. Young men have assured me over and over again that what they had to do in business in order to keep their situations rendered it impossible for them to make a profession of Christianity; and that in any case Christianity and the competitive system, which forms the economic basis of modern civilisation, seemed to them to come into conflict at every point. They could not understand how there could be truce between them, and hence they had to accept facts as they were and refuse to play the hypocrite by maintaining on Sunday what their conduct belied all the rest of the week. I know this to be a very serious problem with young men, and it is the best of them that feel it most.

But I am far from suggesting that these are the majority. When troubled brother clergy come to me and ask why they cannot get their parishioners to come to church, and in what

manner they themselves are to blame for failing to lay hold of the absentees, or when laymen in superior fashion lecture the clergy in the newspapers and explain why people will not listen to them—the explanations of one critic neutralising those of another as a rule—and warn us that there are more dreadful things in store for us if we do not amend our ways, or when in private conventions of the clergy I find them inclined to wear sackcloth and ashes and confess their own incompetence and unworthiness as responsible for all the mischief, I can only tell them they are mistaken. I know it, for I think I have probed the matter to the bottom. The true explanation is to be sought in the habit of mind of the age, and it is easy to see what that is and what has made it. For generations past we have been growing a type of man whose interests are mainly on the outside of life. The amazing advance of physical science in the Victorian era, following upon the industrial revolution of the eighteenth century, has accustomed us to values expressible for the most part in terms of what can be measured and weighed. Many people would refuse to believe that there could be other values. Men tend to become like their pursuits, and our utilitarian pursuits have made us utilitarian in taste and outlook. The practical man is assumed to be the man who knows best how to succeed in utilitarian schemes, not the

man who sees life *sub specie æternitatis* and orders his course accordingly. Rich and poor, it is just the same: the one has what the other wants, and neither has inclination for the supermundane.

This is the main secret of the falling off in church attendance. Taken on the whole the clergy of to-day, of any denomination and of all, are at least the equals of those of any previous generation and superior to most. The state of things disclosed in Laud's metropolitical visitation, for example, or in Cecil's report to Queen Elizabeth, would be inconceivable at the present time. We have few or no evil-livers now among those having cure of souls, no absentee holders of benefices, no worldly prelates who never enter their dioceses. We have no ground for assuming that the standard of learning or intellectual attainment was higher among parish priests in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries than it is now; the evidence points rather to the contrary. Sermons, when there were any, were not easier to listen to then than now. Most of them must have been rather tedious, judged by modern tastes in homiletical matters. It was the hearers that were different, that is all. There was nothing to compete with the sermon then; the church was the one great social centre in every parish, the religious service the principal social excitement to which people



looked forward. There were no picture palaces, no bicycles or motor-cars, no popular magazines and illustrated papers. The population was not mobile; where people were born there they lived, and there for the most part they died. They have to be entertained nowadays, and their occupations throughout the week are such as to incline them to demand entertainment on Sunday, and they get it. Let all this be remembered, and the wonder will not be that so many stay away from church, but that so many go. It will have to alter, of that we may be sure. Neither man nor nation can go on for ever pampering the flesh and starving the soul. The time must come, and this terrible war is helping to bring it about, when civilisation as a whole will re-discover that man cannot live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

These are some of the things I learned from my intercourse with Fabians and Labour men, and I have seen no reason to revise the conclusions thus arrived at. Our social system is not Christian; it is largely anti-Christian; and our productive energies need to be socialised in order that the individual may be free to develop the best that is in him and attain to a richer, fuller, gladder life than the majority have yet glimpsed. But until the common consciousness is socialised that day must wait; and to have the

common consciousness socialised means to have it spiritualised. We have to realise that we are members one of another, and that no life can be lived to itself alone. In other words, the re-affirmation of religion is the prize necessity of the hour in every department of our national activity, and without it no progress worthy of the name can or will be made when the time comes for rebuilding the ruined fabric of human hopes and aims.

## CHAPTER VII

### PREACHING, INDIVIDUAL DEALING, BEGINNINGS OF RELIGIOUS CONTROVERSY

FROM the beginning of my London ministry my pulpit teaching was viewed with suspicion by orthodox Nonconformists. It lacked their mental accent; few of their time-honoured evangelical phrases found a place in it, and consequently they were somewhat at a loss to know what to make of it; it did not fit in with their traditions at all. Such, at any rate, was the feeling of the rank and file. Before long their leaders began to show them that it was pernicious. Perhaps they did not need much showing; I rather suspect that the uneasiness of the rank and file was due originally to the free-spoken way in which I introduced Biblical criticism into my preaching. They did not want the Bible interfered with at any price, or so they said. It did not occur to them that the Bible was made a much more interesting, human, and readable book thereby, and that its homiletical value was greatly increased. The habit of reticence concerning the assured results of

criticism adopted by so many preachers seemed to me then, as it does now, a mistaken one and not wholly honest. The pulpit has everything to gain and nothing to lose in force and effectiveness by being frank about such matters. But time is required for people to get used to them, and the transition period is necessarily a difficult one for the preacher who takes his duty seriously and tries to instruct his people in the conclusions to which scholars generally have come with regard to the sacred narrative. Hearers are apt to take alarm, and to consider that any questioning of the record as it stands weakens its authority. It is only by degrees, as a rule, that they can be made to see that the contrary is the fact, that expert criticism of the literary and historical sources of the various books of the Bible serves only to establish more firmly than ever its uniqueness as a record of divine revelation and of the ways of God with man. For my own part I confess that, looking back upon a twenty-one years' ministry, I can but feel grateful for the light that has been shed upon my knowledge of scripture during that period, and the greater power thus given in interpreting scripture in terms of modern problems and modern needs. In no department of my work have I benefited more. If I had the time to do it as it ought to be done I should like to write a commentary on those portions of holy writ on which scientific criticism

has rendered it possible to preach and which were not susceptible of sermonic treatment heretofore. One would be glad to show busy pastors how close such passages come in the parallels they furnish to conditions with which we find ourselves wrestling to-day. It would be a useful work. Perhaps some one else will adopt the suggestion and do it. It has not been done yet, notwithstanding the extensive literature in which the results of investigation in this field have been given to the public.

If I am to believe the testimony of numerous clerical correspondents, my published sermons did something to help in this direction. One eminent Nonconformist minister, the soundness of whose theology could hardly be called in question, has gone so far as to say that my influence as thus exercised has led to a great and general change in the way of discussing problems of Biblical exegesis in the pulpit; he affirms that preachers are now freer to state what they know about such questions without risk of disturbing their congregations unduly; and they are better able to give their knowledge a spiritual application. I mention this with some diffidence, but I think it may be true. Both pulpit and pew have moved faster and farther than they realise within the last ten years in taking positions for granted which formerly would have been viewed with consternation.

There could be no greater misconception than that so commonly held, that the general bearing of criticism is negative and destructive. It is both positive and constructive, and has discovered the Bible to be more than ever the word of God and an inexhaustible armoury of spiritual truth.

My sermons have always been published freely, but mostly during the thirteen years of my association with the City Temple. At first they were reported and issued without revision, a practice which I later saw reason to discontinue. For the last eight or nine years my method has been to dictate them before preaching them, and when possible to see a proof before allowing them to appear in print. Comparatively few journalists can report a sermon properly; it is a very different matter from reporting a public speech; and in all innocence they have made me responsible occasionally for the most atrocious sentiments. And when it comes to quotations, heaven help the preacher! It is best to avoid everything but the plainest English unless one wants to mystify or demoralise the sermon-reading public. I once repeated a saying of Origen's, "*Caritas est Passio*," a fairly obvious one I should have thought. Next day it appeared in the Press: "*Contas est Bacio*"<sup>1</sup>—a poser for

<sup>1</sup> Be it far from me to rail at the Press. On the whole, in Great Britain we have every reason to be proud of our



philologists. I have long been cured of any tendency to make use of academic language in the pulpit, and my firm advice to young preachers would be, avoid it as you would the plague. You cannot be too simple in your phrasing, whatever you are in your thought. Never overrate the intelligence of your hearers. Have you never noticed how much more intently the grown-ups will listen to a children's sermon than they will to one supposed to be addressed to

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Press and the way in which it is conducted. But if I were asked to supply a volume of recollections of the funny or exasperating distortions of my utterances which have appeared in the newspapers, I think I could easily manage it. With the best of intentions sometimes one paper has credited me with saying something wholly indefensible for which others have promptly and solemnly taken me to task. Of late, for example, I have been writing articles, mostly with an ethical or religious bearing, for a Sunday paper. But the editors retained the right to announce the subjects of my articles as they thought best. Here are two specimens. I wrote one which I entitled "War and Sacrifice." It appeared as "Why we envy our Dead." That I had made no mention of envying the dead was apparently a negligible point. Next week the *New Statesman* had a leader on my supposed delinquency in choosing such a theme. After the murder of Captain Fryatt I sent another with the superscription, "The Humanity of Reprisals." In advertisement and in the paper itself it was presented to the public as follows: "Hang the Ruffians! Hang them now!" Effective certainly, but the flood of abuse I got afterwards from fierce-minded pacifists for my vigorous language was scarcely merited. The credit wholly belonged to the editor. A good fellow he was, too, and I should be sorry to rob him of this or any other distinction he had fairly earned.

themselves? The hint is worth taking. I am not recommending simplicity in the matter of sermons—though there is something to be said for that too, without descending to claptrap—but simplicity in speech. It is not so easy to be simple as some people suppose. I have seldom let my congregations off easily; I always endeavoured to make it my business to teach them something solid and true upon the passage of scripture upon which our attention was fixed for the time being, and to give it a practical application to their own experience; but I hope I did not often weary them with high-sounding rhetoric and vague phraseology. Hence there grew up a demand for the circulation of the sermon by the printed page. One at least was published every week in the *Christian Commonwealth*. During the last few years before I left London another appeared fortnightly in the *Christian World Pulpit*, and a third in the *British Congregationalist*, besides occasional reprints in the American and Colonial religious Press. Latterly the regular weekly circulation of the sermons preached in the City Temple must have been about sixty thousand. Three published sermons a week is too great an output for one preacher, and I would never undertake the like again. It entails a considerable amount of unavoidable labour, and has the additional disadvantage of preventing any accumulation of material: what

is given out is gone for ever. Further, it is impossible to find time for any other description of literary work. Since I was ordained in the Church of England I have been pressed to resume the weekly publication of my sermons, and I take this opportunity of explaining why I have felt obliged to decline. I am sorry to lose touch with my invisible congregation all over the world, but the drain is too great. I am glad to be able to make a fresh start without committing myself to such a strenuous task. For the publication went on whether I were occupying the pulpit or not. If I were ill or away on holiday the inevitable sermon proof came just the same, or more often was printed without correction, with the result that every word I ever said from the pulpit found its way into print sooner or later. I think I may fairly be spared that ordeal for the rest of my allotted span of years in the Christian ministry, be it long or short.

Many of the sermons were translated into foreign languages, and a volume of interesting reminiscences might be compiled from the correspondence arising out of this fact. One or two collections of them appeared in Germany, another in Holland, and a certain number in France, Switzerland, and Scandinavia. Letters about them came from queer out-of-the-way corners in the Balkans, South America, and tropical Africa, not to speak of Egypt and India.

Few or no civilised countries, or uncivilised ones wherein Europeans were to be found, were unrepresented in that correspondence; much of it was very touching and not a little curious. Japan has always supplied a goodly company of readers of my sermons, and I have been deeply impressed by the high quality of the letters received from that country on religious subjects. A young man once journeyed up to London to see me from the Orkney Islands. He said he had been a regular reader of my sermons for years, and felt he would like to know me personally. Others came on the same kind of errand from even more remote places, such as Iceland and the hinterland of British Burmah. But this department of my ministry, however interesting to myself, may not be equally so to others, so I will say no more about it.

One outcome of it deserves special mention. It created a kind of spontaneous confessional. The central position of the City Temple made it a place of resort for visitors of all descriptions, and the connection thus established between the pulpit and casual members of the congregation was often carried further by means of the printed sermon. Frequently it happened that such hearers or readers would have their attention arrested by the delineation of some moral problem or some case of special difficulty or sorrow which appeared to them identical with

their own. Sometimes this took place by means of the printed page only, and I should hear from persons with reference to it who had not only never been in the City Temple themselves, but did not know anybody who had. They would write and ask for an appointment and make a journey to see me and tell their story of sin, trouble, or perplexity of mind. This practice grew and grew until at length it had to be carefully regulated and the number of interviews curtailed.

As might be expected, many of those who thus sought an opportunity of discussing questions personal to themselves were more self-conscious than earnest, and too much inclined to consider their own particular interests and experiences as of special importance. There are many such people in the world, and as a rule they have no compunction in taking up a minister's time, and no conception of the value of it. Moreover, they much prefer hearing themselves talk to listening to any ghostly counsel, however moderate; on, on, on they will go and nothing can stop them, detailing with wearisome minuteness all their trivial thoughts and feelings, and all their domestic politics from the day they began to have any, declaring how unappreciated they have been and how little their merits have been regarded by those about them. As a rule my sympathies were with the latter. Cranks

innumerable put in an appearance, and the usual array of impostors—ministers of religion in general being regarded as the fair prey of these gentry. People in financial difficulties were marvellously directed by the Lord to come to me for any sum varying from five pounds to a thousand. I used to feel it rather unfair that the Lord did not give me warning of it before they arrived. Patentees of inventions who could not get a capitalist to listen to them thought I might be able to pronounce the open sesame on their behalf. Budding geniuses, poets especially, but all sorts in the aggregate, honoured me with their confidence and the suggestion that I should go down in history as the benefactor who first gave them a helping hand to climb the ladder of fame. One young man whose name was Parker wrote to remind me that my predecessor had made his first start in life as a preacher by addressing himself to Dr. Campbell, the leading Nonconformist ecclesiastical statesman of his day; “and,” he modestly added, “history is now repeating itself; once more a Parker writes to a Campbell, and who knows what the outcome may be for the kingdom of heaven?” He wanted to become my assistant after the fashion of the other Parker with the other Campbell. However, as there was no lack of such offers and no possibility of my availing myself of any of them, I declined.



Madmen sought me out too, to my no small risk now and then. One Sunday morning a homicidal maniac quietly walked up the pulpit steps behind me, and leaning over my shoulder whispered, "I have been specially sent by Almighty God to kill you, Mr. Campbell, if you do not preach the gospel. I shall remain here and listen, and if you fail to preach the gospel I will slay you as a false prophet." Turning my head round, I answered in an equally low tone, "Go down to the floor of the church at once." He smiled, bowed, and did so, keeping a keen eye on me all the time. I beckoned a sidesman up and asked *sotto voce* to have him removed. With difficulty the request was obeyed, for the fellow made a furious fight once he was got outside, but the congregation never knew and the service proceeded without interruption.

Another time a well-mannered gentleman who had written for an appointment in the ordinary way came into my vestry and carefully shut the door behind him. He then explained that he considered himself a special instrument in God's hands for getting rid of dangerous teachers, and that he thought of beginning on me. He said he was armed for that purpose, and indeed I saw that he carried a weapon of some sort under his coat. I asked him to sit down and discuss the matter quietly, which he did, continuing

his discourse with the utmost courtesy. Meanwhile I was pressing with my foot a bell which communicated with the outer vestry, where the sexton or some of the office-bearers were usually to be found. But on that occasion of all occasions no one was there, and I was left alone closeted with a lunatic who had come expressly to murder me. I did my best to show him that possibly he was mistaken in thinking that heaven had sent him to the City Temple for his first victim, and I recommended a number of other, in my judgment, far more dangerous speakers and writers to whom he might pay a visit, such as Mr. Bernard Shaw, Mr. Roosevelt, Mr. Lloyd George, and a few more. I nearly brought on the climax by mentioning Mr. Lloyd George, for it appeared he was beneath my visitor's contempt, never having touched a serious subject in his life and being prone to the use of unclassical language. I suggested Mr. Winston Churchill as a substitute, and he seemed better satisfied. In the end he decided to give me another chance, and went off with a friendly warning on his lips. From the hour that the theologians began to cudgel me I had a continuous procession of such not very pleasant interviewers, though few who meant business quite as determinedly as this one. They came and went with the theological storm—in fact they were theologians themselves to a man. As time went on I had to secure protec-

tion against them all by having an official appointed whose duty it was to guard the door of my sanctum and thin out the callers, only letting in those of whose *bona fides* he felt reasonably assured.

But, setting aside all that was merely tiresome or useless in the time thus expended in the granting of private interviews, I cannot but feel in retrospect that this side of my ministry was as fruitful as any. I am inclined to think that I did as much in this way as from the pulpit, though that is a matter concerning which only God knows the truth. It taught me much. I see now the value of the confessional as an institution, though I cannot go so far as to agree with my Catholic friends in the Church of England that the practice of confession ought to be compulsory and universal as in the Church of Rome, and that none should be admitted to Holy Communion without undergoing it as a sacrament and receiving absolution. That is a different matter, and further experience of its working may lead me to modify my present view, but I do not think so. "There are diversities of gifts but the same Spirit." Not every one has the confessor's gift any more than every one has the preacher's, and to make confession a quasi-mechanical process in which a priest perhaps knows little of the deep workings of the human heart and has but little natural sympathy, or in which the penitent reels off a

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patter of formal acknowledgments of wrongdoing, can hardly tend to edification. Then, too, I should think it extremely undesirable to set mere boys in Holy Orders to hear the confessions of women.

But this is an aside—I must keep to my own story and the giving of my own testimony. There is that in human nature, and in some characters more than others, which finds relief in uttering to human ears that which must ordinarily be kept between the soul and God. The mere act of telling is a help and at the same time a searching of motives and culpability, and if this craving were to find no outlet there would be many thousands of our fellow-creatures condemned to bear a burden in secret which grows heavier with the years. The longing for the word of authority, the word of comfort and release, from the lips of God's minister is a longing which cannot be ignored and ought not to be denied. "Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God." There are, I am afraid, many more ministers of Christ than stewards of the mysteries of God. It is wonderful how few people there are in the world to whom we can open our hearts freely, how few to whom we would dare to humiliate ourselves by admission of weakness and failure, how few to listen and understand. It is rare indeed to find a

person who can hear a story concerning another's fall from purity and truth and be as though he heard it not, rare to come upon one who knows the dark points in a friend's history and respects that friend as much as before. Somehow we are apt to look upon a man with other eyes the moment we discover anything in his past inconsistent with the ideal we had formed of him; he drops in our esteem thereby; and yet he may be all we formerly thought him, all the more so, perhaps, because of the fires of affliction through which he has passed in atoning for his transgression or for so much of it as he can. The sinner is well advised in shielding his soul when possible, not only from the unkindly scrutiny of his fellow-sinners, but from that same scrutiny when not intentionally uncharitable.

Yet there is the need. The remorseful erring one wants to bare his heart, wants to hear human lips pronounce in God's name the good tidings of pardon and peace, wants encouragement, direction, moral guidance. And sometimes he wants all this in an impersonal way, as it were. People have sometimes come to me at the City Temple from a long distance, even as far as America, simply and solely because they did not wish to tell any minister near at home what they longed to tell somebody somewhere about the tragedies of their inner life. They preferred to give me no clue to their identity,

but merely came, held the conversation, and went away again, and I saw them no more. Sometimes, but rarely, I was able to induce them, when I thought it advisable, to go to their own clergyman on their return and make a clean breast of the whole matter. When a Roman or High Anglican penitent came to me I gave this advice as a rule, knowing that no harm could come of it, and that the seal of the confessional was enough to preserve their confidence from misuse. Where shame was a factor in the case one often had to insist upon the duty of making a frank avowal to the parties most immediately concerned. In a very large proportion of cases I noted that the principal reason for choosing me as the repository of the confidence was precisely that I did not know the speaker or anything of his antecedents.

Taken all together, I think I have probably heard as many confessions as most Anglican or Roman priests, though of course I never professed to give absolution in the sacerdotal sense. And I should think I have heard as many sad and heart-breaking stories as any man living. I never go by appearances now: anything may be true of anybody. From the highest to the lowest in the social scale I found much the same thing, and the same kind of moral complication occurred over and over again. Sickening abnormalities came my way



and griefs manifold for which there could be no cure in this world, nothing but the tender compassion of the "High Priest touched with the feeling of our infirmities." But on the whole—I say it solemnly and deliberately—I look back upon that long and valuable experience, not only with a feeling of profound humility in regard to my own shortcomings, but with one of enhanced respect for poor, struggling, aspiring humanity. If we could know more of each other's temptations and trials, hopes and fears, secret efforts, defeats, and self-reproach, loneliness and tears, we should be more sparing in our censures and more ready with our help and trust.

But, let me repeat, comparatively little of this personal dealing with souls had a definitely theological bearing. It was pathological in the spiritual sense rather than theological. This may seem very strange to certain clergy of my acquaintance, both Anglican and Nonconformist, to whom ministering to troubled anxious hearts is synonymous with the inculcation of doctrine. So it is perhaps, but the fact should not be obvious. The doctrine must be as humanly presented as possible, and not too much of it. I can only speak as I found, and I should think not one penitent in a hundred ever asked me a question about the doctrinal basis of the sermons from which they had received help or which had

brought them to see me. What influenced them was to find themselves understood, or to realise—often to their astonishment—that their particular moral problem was by no means unique. Then the surgery was applied, or the healing as the case might be. For sin I had but one remedy then as now: the infinite love of Christ. Right the wrong as far as you can, I used to say, and leave the rest to God. As a rule the very point was to know how to right the wrong. Also persons who were inclined to blame others for their misfortunes had sometimes to be made to see themselves as they really were, and this was no easy task with the majority of them. And deeply wronged people, living under conditions of almost incredible hardship and heart-breaking cruelty, would come to ask what their duty was, and again and again I found it difficult to tell them. It is not so easy to see the right thing in all eventualities as is frequently imagined; duty is sometimes easier to do than to discover.

The world knew nothing of this ministry. I never mentioned it, exacting though it was but very blessed too. It went on by its own momentum, and still does to some extent notwithstanding my withdrawal from the central position where it was formerly exercised.

By and by the underground rumblings concerning my theological liberalism, which had

been audible from the moment of my arrival in London, grew rapidly louder. Matters came to a head after an address which I gave to the London Board of Congregational ministers in September 1906 on the "Changing Sanctions of Popular Theology." The occasion was private, but a religious newspaper published the subject of my address together with the principal points thereof, and gave some account of the commotion it had caused. A second meeting was devoted to discussion of the issues raised. This also was *in camera*, but as the information had leaked out in the manner aforesaid that wigs were to be on the green, there was a packed attendance of ministers entitled to be present. There is no need to recapitulate what followed, as it was merely an anticipation of the fiercer outbreak of a few months ahead. But that meeting was really the commencement of the new theology controversy, which is therefore almost exactly ten years old. At the beginning of January 1907 it suddenly blazed in the daily Press, and from that day forward became a ceaseless hail of criticism and abuse, directed upon my devoted head. It continued for a considerable time with undiminished bitterness, though the secular Press of course dropped it except for occasional allusions after the first few months or so. I prefer to draw a veil over this period of my life; I have no pleasure in looking back upon it, and

there can be no good in reopening old sores. I was forthwith excluded from active participation in the affairs of organised Nonconformity and never afterwards resumed it. It is to be regretted that those chiefly responsible for this policy and all that accrued therefrom, did not see fit to choose a more excellent way, but it is too late to talk about that now.

In March 1907 I made my last appearance on the platform of the National Free Church Council. Various hints had been given to me from official quarters not to go, but as this would have been tantamount to declaring that I did not want to associate myself with my Nonconformist brethren, and as no straightforward indication was given me that my presence was undesired, I felt that the onus of a rupture of relations ought not to be placed upon me, so I kept my appointment and went. It is a matter of satisfaction to me to-day to recall that my speech on that occasion was on Christian unity, and that I pleaded earnestly for a *rapprochement* with the Established Church. What I suggested was that an effort should be made to hold the Church Congress and the Free Church Congress together at least once. I pointed out that the programmes of the two assemblies were very similar with the exception of a few debatable subjects, and urged that the direct and indirect gains of such a mode of exhibiting our common

Christianity would be enormous. I still think so. Our differences are less likely to be composed by academic discussions than by personal touch; and the mere fact that the two great religious bodies into which this country is divided could meet in common session and join in acts of common worship would greatly impress the national consciousness and have far-reaching results for good. The difficulties in arranging it could be got over if we really wanted to do so. I think I could sing my *Nunc Dimittis* with a cheerful heart if I could live to see it an accomplished fact, for I should know what must inevitably follow.

What I chiefly regret in connection with this period is that I attempted a reply to my critics by writing the book known as the *New Theology*. If I had let the subject alone the controversy might soon have died down; as it was I but added fuel to the flame and gave the *odium theologicum* something to feed upon, besides causing widespread misunderstanding as to the real nature of my ministry. I forgot or failed to take into account the fact that there were tens of thousands of good people who had no direct acquaintance with the latter, and who would therefore naturally form their judgment of its character by the controversial atmosphere in which it was suddenly presented to their notice. I am perfectly willing to be judged by the wholeness of my pulpit

utterances during the many years that I have been a preacher with the sole exception of this period of disputation and cross purposes. I am thankful to be able to say that I have never made a personal attack upon any man in my life, but this unfortunate controversy made me the object of personal attacks of the most virulent description from the day my book appeared. I believe there are many people who think that the controversy began through my writing the book. That is an entire mistake; the controversy called it forth. It was much too hastily written, was crude and uncompromising in statement, polemical in spirit, and gave a totally wrong impression of the quality of the sermons delivered week by week from the City Temple pulpit. Some of my staunchest friends and supporters quickly perceived this and wanted a supplementary volume issued, but I felt convinced that that would not serve to correct the misconception in so far as it existed. Could not something be done, they argued, to let the outside public see that my ministry was a spiritual ministry and anything but disputatious in tone? Perhaps they were right, but nothing was done, and I should not be surprised to learn that there are many even among liberal-minded Christians who to this day believe my pulpit style to be like that of the *New Theology*, on the intellectual



rather than the spiritual plane, and argumentative rather than expository or hortatory. I have had some amusing examples of this on occasion. People hearing me for the first time often seem to expect a Boanerges in the pulpit, and are quite surprised to find a speaker who indulges in no flowers of rhetoric and whom they have to sit very still to hear at all. It might have occurred to some of my antagonists that there must be something in my teaching other than a supposed series of theological innovations and assaults upon venerable doctrines or I could not have retained the loyalty of my congregation. No congregation will long submit to be fed on negatives; people who come to church regularly come for spiritual help, and if they do not get it they will not come long. Saints of God like the late Lord Radstock, a simple-minded orthodox evangelical of the old school, frankly admitted this. After a visit to the City Temple that good man publicly stated that he felt the place to be full of the Holy Ghost. Those who were most determined and persistent in their public opposition to my work were those who knew little or nothing about it at first hand. Not a few deemed themselves qualified to pronounce upon it, and to maintain unalterably an attitude of hostility towards it, who had never read a line of my book or my published sermons, and who had never either

seen me or heard me preach. Such is more or less the way of the world, and the mode in which prejudices are nursed in all departments of life and thought.

It might surprise some of these people to be told what was in the book they so unreservedly condemned. It was commonly assumed, for instance, that it was a Unitarian tract. That it certainly was not. Neither was it pantheistic in the historic sense of the term, although the monism it advocated was pressed much too far. It did not deny the divinity of our Lord; on the contrary it asserted that all that had been authoritatively affirmed of His person by the Christian Church was true.<sup>1</sup> It identified the Jesus of history with the Christ of faith while insisting upon the true human consciousness of the former.<sup>2</sup> It declared that the ancient formulated and authoritative expressions of belief known as the creeds were fundamentally true though couched in a different mental dialect from ours of to-day, citing particularly the Athanasian Creed in illustration of this.<sup>3</sup> It did not throw over the miraculous as so many people have erroneously fancied; it did the opposite; it maintained the coming rehabilitation of miracle at the hands of modern science. It even expressed confidence in the historicity

<sup>1</sup> Chap. vii. p. 94.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* et v. and vi.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* v. p. 72.

of the physical resurrection of Christ,<sup>1</sup> much to the disgust of many religious liberals who tried hard to convince me that this statement gave away the whole case for a liberal theology. It showed the necessity for the doctrine of the Trinity.<sup>2</sup> Judging by my correspondence I feel sure that many who distrusted my teaching were unaware of the above facts.

The faults of the book are to be sought in a different direction. First, in pressing the monistic basis of its re-statement of doctrine so far as to imperil personality altogether and confuse human and divine. This led to the further consequence, in theory at least, of weakening the sense of moral responsibility. Its negative view of evil was much misunderstood. It was thought to deny the reality of sin, which it did not, or at any rate was not meant to do. It endeavoured too much to give a rationalistic treatment of the great mysteries of the faith. In fact, as Hooker says,<sup>3</sup> and as my book exemplified, the root of heresy is the attempt to rationalise what cannot be rationalised, but must remain mystery without outraging reason. Its omissions were serious, notably in its explication of the doctrine of Atonement. Most of what was said about this great aspect of Christian truth was sound enough as far as it went, but

<sup>1</sup> Chap. xii. p. 218 *et seq.*

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* vi. p. 85 *et seq.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ecc. Pol.*, Book V. cap. lii.

what was not said was by far the most important element in the doctrine. I may be mistaken, but I believe it was this more than anything else, this inadequate view of the sacrifice of the cross, which caused the alarm in orthodox circles. Furthermore, and as a direct outcome of the failure to put the Incarnation and the Atonement in their true setting, the Church and the sacraments were relegated to a subordinate and utterly unhistoric position.

It should be remembered that the book was written *ad populum*, of necessity so, and suffered somewhat on that account. But it was badly proportioned, and was marked by the capital defect that the gospel it had to offer, though strenuous enough in its demands upon the higher side of human nature, contained no radical cure for the lower. It was, too, a break with history, and that is always fatal. But a further examination of its tendencies and how they came to be modified will be given in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE NEW THEOLOGY

THE replies to my book were legion, but one in particular ought to be mentioned because of the effect it had indirectly in sending me anew to the sources whence its author derived the chief inspiration of his own religious life. I refer to the *New Theology and the Old Religion* by Dr. Gore, then Bishop of Birmingham. The book consisted of eight lectures delivered in Birmingham Cathedral, and was issued in the autumn of 1907. It is strange to me to reflect that these lectures were originally spoken from the pulpit wherein I now stand, and by the man who eight years later was to receive me afresh into the communion of the Church of England. Wondrous are the ways of God. Dr. Gore sent me the book with a courteous letter expressing the hope that he had not misrepresented me in any way, or failed in the respect due to my sincerity and spiritual influence. I have since had reason to know that these were not random words; the writer had taken pains to inform himself all along as to the general

character of my ministry, and regularly read the paper which published the greater number of my sermons. His book was expressly a criticism of Sir Oliver Lodge's views as well as mine; he bracketed both under the same title. His evident desire to treat us fairly and even appreciatively, as far as he reasonably could, was illustrated in the closing words of the first lecture: "To any doubter, then, whom I can reach who is supposed to refer for his doubts to the authority of the New Theology, I would say first of all: You are rejecting what these men reject, but are you believing what they believe? After all, if you hold and practise the creed which has just been quoted, you will not be indeed in the full stream of the Church's belief, but you will at least be within sight of the city of God."

If I may say so, the book was not an argument; it was an exposition. Being intended for the general churchgoing public, it put the case as simply as possible and without unnecessary verbiage. All it did was to set what its author took to be the positions of the exponents of the new theology side by side with the affirmations of the old and leave them to make their own impression. It did misrepresent me a little, as was inevitable. For example, it assumed throughout that I ignored the transcendence of God and was inclined to identify Him with His universe. I never did that; I was not a suffi-



ciently thorough-going Spinozaist to fall into such an error. But I do not wonder that Dr. Gore thought so. The whole emphasis of my book and many of my contemporary sermons had been thrown in that direction. And he was on unassailable ground when he went on to point out that in history this conception of the being of God and its relation to the world has shown itself to be comparatively weak in awakening moral effort and enthusiasm. And, as he also added, it was with the Hebraic conception of God as righteous, perfect, self-sufficient, and all-complete, transcending His own creation, that moral lift came to the human race, culminating in the work and person of Jesus Christ. This was a simple fact; there was no denying it. "By their fruits ye shall know them." It was not Dr. Gore's book which caused me to face this fact; I had already been conscious of it as some of my pulpit utterances show; but it compelled me to visualise honestly and persistently the practical issue it raised and try to find a way through it. And I did not find it. It was not till I ultimately came to accept frankly and *ex animo* the Catholic view of the mystery of the divine being that I arrived at settlement and satisfaction on the point above described.

Further, the Bishop was right in insisting that, wittingly or unwittingly, my view of the nature

of sin would tend to make men think more lightly of it. By speaking of it as the remains of the ape and tiger quality in our ascending humanity we belittle its tragedy, its terrible-ness, its ever-present menace. What is more—these are my words, not Dr. Gore's—we fail in arousing that deep sense of contrition which is a pre-requisite of the highest types of holiness. It does not sufficiently emphasise individual responsibility, the fact that the seat of transgression is in the perverted will, and that the disorder of creation proceeds from the soul of man outward rather than from without inward. This was another grave defect of my book, a defect not so easily traceable in my sermons; for I had never failed to appeal to the guilty conscience in my preaching or to warn my hearers against trifling with the laws of God. In so doing I appealed definitely to the will of the sinner and sought to induce repentance, a procedure not easy to justify logically from my own premises. It was an illustration of Mr. Picton's dictum that, be the philosophy what it may, things remain ethically the same as before. In practice my view of sin was serious enough; in theory it was not. This poor sad world of ours needs a more strenuous gospel than the assurance that our sins are merely wrong turnings on the upward road, and that all must inevitably come right at last. As I

more than once remarked from the pulpit in my most latitudinarian days, there is nothing automatic about the process of man's redemption. Once again I have to agree with Dr. Gore through my own practical experience as a Christian minister, the value of the seriousness of the traditional Christian view of sin lies in its moral effects. Nothing that minimises that value can fairly claim to be true to the facts of human nature and history.

But it is in regard to the person of Christ that, as Dr. Gore shows in the lecture on the meaning of our Lord's divinity, the new theology at once comes nearest to and diverges farthest from the old. He says on page 85 of the book aforesaid : " This doctrine of the eternal divine man would not require much restatement to be brought into harmony with the Church doctrine of the Eternal Word or Son." But on the following page he adds : " It is plain that such an idea of the incarnation as is here presented,"—that is, the idea that every human life is in a degree an incarnation of the divine—" while it has in it much that is very close to the biblical idea, is at the root fundamentally different." The difference, according to the Bishop, was that it destroyed the saviourhood of Christ in any real sense. I doubt if that was ever quite true of my system, as it certainly was not true of my pulpit application of it. I always held firmly

to the view that the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith were one, and the latter I preached as saviour as emphatically as any orthodox Christian could desire. Moreover, He was my own saviour, and I could not do without Him; to take Him out of my spiritual life would have been to pluck the sun out of the sky. But the danger was in asserting without qualification that all that was true of Him was potentially true of every human being. I could say that now in such terms as not to derogate from His sovereign rights in any particular or claim too much for the race, but I should put it very differently from the way in which I put it then. It is our inheritance in Him and not otherwise. So far as I am aware no one has pointed out the fact—perhaps it is that I have not come across it—that it was the Eutychian tendency in my statement of the doctrine of the person of Christ which was its greatest defect. It could not accurately be described as Arian, for it did assert the eternity of the creative Word; neither was it Macedonian, for it did not discriminate between Son and Spirit in such wise as to reduce the latter to an impersonal emanation from Deity; nor was it Apollinarian, for it did not make divinity swallow up humanity, rather it sought to view the latter always in the light of the former. Sabellian of course it never was, though it was often accused of being so, and

in the hands of some of its professed advocates was often distorted into the semblance thereof.

Dr. Gore gave me credit for being more friendly to the miraculous, especially in relation to our Lord, than other representatives of the new theology movement. But when he went on to quote Professor Harnack and Professor Percy Gardner in illustration of the widespread modern disbelief in miracles, with the qualified exception of miracles of healing, in the New Testament or out of it, he might have said than liberal Protestants at large. For the tendency he thus noted, to be distrustful of supernatural interferences with the ordinary ways of nature, is a feature of liberalism in general and not of any one school in particular. I was convinced ten years ago, as I am now, that this tendency will be reversed by and by.

I have thus singled out Dr. Gore's book for reference, not because it was or professed to be a profound treatise on the general subject of systematic theology, but because it led me to face the above-mentioned difficulties with new earnestness. The deep respect I have felt for its author ever since my Oxford days and the gentle and kindly spirit in which he approached me at this trying time had their immediate effect. The latter was in such marked contrast with the harshness with which I was being

treated in certain ultra-orthodox evangelical quarters that I was deeply touched thereby.<sup>1</sup> It made me read the book with close attention, and sent me back to the conscientious study of the author's theological works in general. In particular I re-read his Bampton Lectures on *The Incarnation of the Son of God* with which I had first made acquaintance as an undergraduate at or soon after the time of their delivery. In due succession and at my leisure I read through all the rest of his published writings. *The Body*

<sup>1</sup> Other instances of this generosity of spirit might be cited, but one in particular lives in my memory to which I hope it may not be out of place to give recognition here. I had long been on friendly terms with the Bishop of London, and it had been his habit to invite me to come and see him from time to time. After the new theology controversy began I wondered if he would find it inexpedient to continue this. Not at all : the invitation came just the same in due course. It so happened that on the day I went to Fulham in response thereto I had been subjected to what I then felt to be an unjustifiable series of affronts at the hands of prominent Noneonformists who should have known better, and was rather sore in consequence. The Bishop came out to meet me, slipped his arm through mine in his customary brotherly fashion, and began at once to talk about the situation. "I should like you to know," he observed, "that I am occasionally obliged to criticise your views in public; people often question me about them; but I never offer any such criticism without first telling those present that we are personal friends and that I have a high regard and esteem for you." I was so deeply moved that I could not make any answer, and my kind-hearted host must have thought me strangely wanting in appreciation of the purport of his words.



of *Christ* impressed me most in view of the immediate problem I was having to face. Later on, but not for some time, and only when the possibility of a return to the Anglican fold was beginning to loom on the horizon, I found invaluable help in his *Church and the Ministry*, *Roman Catholic Claims*, and *Orders and Unity*.

What principally arrested me in Dr. Gore's statement of the case against the new theology was his view that it was a reaction against certain forms of nineteenth century Protestant orthodoxy to which Catholic Christianity did not stand committed in the same degree. First, he said, the kind of orthodoxy against which my protest was made was largely coloured by Deism in its conception of God. Catholic theology, on the other hand, Roman and Anglican, had been comparatively free from this danger. "Here we have the ground for all that reverence for nature and natural law, and all that regard for human nature, which the New Theology found lacking in current orthodoxy. All that proper reverence for nature and for man, as the expression of God, is present in the original Christian theology, which at the same time keeps in the forefront of its teaching that thought of God which forms the substance of the revelation on which it bases its claims to teach—the thought of God as independent of the world and supreme over it, supremely free in His own moral personality

and power as the creator and the redeemer and the judge.”<sup>1</sup>

The second defect of Protestant orthodoxy, according to Dr. Gore, was that it rested its system upon the infallibility of Scripture as a record, a position no longer tenable in view of the work of science and historical criticism. Again he put his finger on a sore place. This observation was absolutely true, and the breakdown of the old Nonconformist reliance upon the letter of Scripture was a cause of more unrest in the churches than the Bishop was perhaps aware. It was, as has been seen, the cause of the first opposition to my pulpit teaching, that teaching having habitually proclaimed what up to then had not been generally explicit in the mind of the Nonconformist laity. Appeal to the living Church is a different matter from appeal to the infallible book, and it is here that Catholics are on their strongest ground and Protestants on their weakest. The Bible as interpreted by the Church is the standard of faith, not *vice versa*.

In the third place, continued Dr. Gore, “the Protestant orthodoxy centred itself upon the doctrine of the atonement rather than of the incarnation, at the same time as it tended to give that doctrine an expression against which

<sup>1</sup> Lecture VIII: *The New Theology and the Church of England*, p. 152.

the moral sense of the world revolted.”<sup>1</sup> This again can hardly be gainsaid. Catholic theology, as distinguished from authoritative Catholic doctrine, has frequently stressed a view of the atoning work of Christ as morally objectionable (to my mind) in its substitutionary aspects as anything Protestantism has ever said on the same subject, but this has not been true of the Catholic creeds or of Catholic teaching as a whole. Not till Dr. Gore pointed it out had my thought rested on the fact that the doctrine of the Atonement has not been formulated in any Catholic dogma. The creeds simply make the affirmation that our Lord suffered for us and leave the matter there. But they do elaborate and emphasise the centrality of the person of Christ for Christian faith, and His relation to the Godhead on the one hand and to manhood on the other. It is the Incarnation, not the Atonement, upon which they specifically dwell. As I have said, this consideration brought new light to me and gave me much to think about in years to come. It is not too much to say that following it out ultimately led me to the position in which I stood at Oxford many years before, but now with the wider knowledge behind me of a long and active ministry spent under Non-conformist auspices.

<sup>1</sup> Lecture VIII: *The New Theology and the Church of England*, p. 155.

Certain other influences were at work in the period under review. The Christ-Myth controversy arose, and I speedily found myself in a dilemma. I had to choose between those of my school of thought who denied the historicity of Jesus and those who clung to it. Of the latter I found that many were drifting towards Unitarianism. The situation became increasingly awkward, and in the end I had to take my own individual course and break away from every set of liberals whose tendency was to belittle the significance of the majestic figure of the Lord of life and glory. Professor Drews' book appeared in 1910 and created something like a panic in orthodox circles both in England and Germany. There was scarcely a religious assembly for a time in which direct reference was not made to it. The fact that the author was not a trained theologian or critic of the gospel sources was either ignored or forgotten for the most part in this country, and reams were written in the way of attack upon and defence of his positions. The most deadly criticism of them that I have read came from the pen of an avowed free-thinker, F. C. Conybeare, in a volume published by the Rationalist Press Association. I have never read elsewhere such a telling piece of literary analysis or scathing exposure of the weakness of a case. That book alone would have disposed of Drews if there had been no qualified theologian in the

field. The dust has all settled now, and I think we may say with confidence that the Christ-Myth school need no longer be taken seriously either in Europe or America.

My friend Dr. Anderson of Dundee, a new theologian of many years' standing, threw in his lot whole-heartedly with Drews and his followers. In fact he anticipated them. From the very beginning of the new theology controversy his inclination had been to call in question the historicity of the New Testament records in their main features. His contention was that the Jesus they presented for our acceptance was "not a human person." Upon this he insisted with continually increasing emphasis and a considerable amount of learning and critical acumen. And a curious result followed which brought home to me with overwhelming force the insecure nature of the new theology premises. On the one hand Dr. Anderson and those who sympathised with him were anxious to discriminate the movement from Unitarianism by pressing into the foreground the all-sufficiency of the Christ of faith as the object of our allegiance and worship, and, on the other, men of much less mark were equally determined to regard our Lord as an actual historical figure but no more than "the first-born among many brethren." The situation caused me prolonged and anxious thought. It forced an issue. I could not give

my adherence to either party. The Christ of Unitarianism was not enough for me, and still less was I disposed to take His feet off the earth and view Him only as an ideal, a divine abstraction to be worshipped as poets and artists worship beauty. Henceforth I became much more emphatic and explicit in my declarations of the uniqueness and indefeasible sovereignty of our Lord Jesus Christ as God and man, the indispensable head and centre of the life of the Christian Church as a whole and of every individual member thereof in particular.

In justice to Dr. Anderson I feel I ought to remark here, as I did to the Congregational Union Assembly in Nottingham in the autumn of 1911, that he has done more than any other man to differentiate the new theology movement from Unitarianism. He felt, as he often said, that liberal Protestantism as a whole was without an evangel; it could not lift; it could not save. He was good enough to express the opinion very strongly that it was my preaching of the saviourhood of the living Christ that had preserved what he called the spirituality of our form of liberalism and prevented it from degenerating into a mere intellectual cult, and he urged me to go further and get rid of all the historical difficulties at a stroke by admitting that the power of Christianity did not depend upon any historical founder. That once granted, he maintained, we



could preach with no uncertain sound the gospel of repentance for the remission of sins, Atonement, salvation by union with the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, being grafted into Christ's mystical body, and all the rest of the Catholic faith. I could not agree. It seemed to me then, as it does now, overwhelmingly true that without the historical facts there would never have been any Catholic faith to preach.

My attitude to the cardinal subject thus indicated can best perhaps be made clear by recalling what I said about it in some of the sermons preached at the time. The following paragraphs from a sermon entitled *Jesus and the Mystic Christ*,<sup>1</sup> preached from the text, "Whom say ye that I am?" (St. Mark viii, 29), may serve to illustrate what I mean.

There is a re-emphasis just now of faith in what may be called the mystical Christ as distinguished from any historic personality whatsoever. This re-emphasis practically eliminates Jesus from the scene altogether and concentrates attention upon the Christ who is the God in all humanity and "the light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world." It is contended that this is the Christ in whom Christian devotion has really believed all along and that the personality of Jesus has had little or nothing to do with the result; in fact, say the supporters

<sup>1</sup> Preached in the City Temple, April 17, 1910.

of this view, even supposing Jesus to have been the actual founder of the Christian religion, we know nothing about Him, we only know the Christ whom no human personality has ever been able to contain or express. This position is being argued with much cogency and force. Its advocates insist that in the last resort New Testament criticism does not give us a human Christ at all; it gives us a super-human being; whatever else it is, "the New Testament is not a Unitarian book;" it does not show us a Christ who is first of all a good man, a real man, a transcendently great religious genius and nothing more. From first to last—I am still stating this particular critical view—this book witnesses to a Christ who is the very life of the believer and stands to him in a relation in which no mere human teacher either could or ought to stand. Thus when the apostle Paul speaks of Christ living in him or of Christ being "formed in" his converts, or of the Church as the mystical body of Christ, he cannot be describing a Christ who can be squeezed into human categories; plainly he is speaking of the mystical Christ, the cosmic Christ, the Christ who is that of God which is becoming manifest in the higher life of the human race. Make no mistake: the school of critics to which I am referring at the moment does not mean to exalt *Jesus* by advancing these conclusions; their intention is the precise contrary; they think our Christianity would be stronger if we thought only of the living Christ, the divine indweller, and not of

what they hold to be the vague and shadowy figure who stands far away in the past at the beginning of Christian history; they frankly disbelieve the gospel accounts of the supposed doings of Jesus in Galilee and Jerusalem, or, what is much the same thing, they affirm that they cannot be certain as to what is true in them and what is not; sometimes the Christ thus portrayed is quite obviously the Christ of faith, the Christ who is not properly to be regarded as a man at all. The Jesus of the gospels, they maintain, is not a real person; He is an ideal, an attempt to dramatise the soul's experience of the Christ of faith. Therefore they fall back upon the experience, not the history; they look to the Christian experience set forth in the epistles, and say, There is the real Christ; there is the Christ who is the heavenly man, the divine redeemer who is born, grows up, suffers, dies, and rises in glory in the heart of the believer; there is the real gospel, as true and helpful now as then, the gospel to hold and declare, the gospel of Christ "the same, yesterday, and to-day, and forever"—but *not* Jesus. It is not Jesus who is the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever. Never mind Him; He may be only a myth; and what does it matter so long as we have the Christ?

Well, that is the position, and there you have it as plainly as I know how to state it. But let me say as emphatically and strongly as I have power to do, that it does not satisfy my religious life, nor does it seem to me to explain

the facts of Christian experience in their entirety. Please understand I am not quarrelling with it. Controversy is about as far from my mind as anything could well be at the present moment. No, I am glad of it up to a point, glad of it because of the evangelic passion it makes possible to minds which cannot be satisfied either by the Christ of dogma or the non-divine Christ of religious rationalism. I do believe with all my heart that the Christ who has been loved and worshipped all the ages through *is* this mystical Christ, who comes so close to us in our spiritual life that it is impossible to find a figure wherewith adequately to describe the relationship. But all the same we cannot dispense with Jesus as the Christ incarnate, and the facts of the case do not warrant us in trying to do so. Jesus and the mystical Christ are one and the same, though the latter is the larger term. It is Jesus who has shown us the mystical Christ. If it were otherwise the very existence of Christianity would to me be unintelligible. Great religious movements do not begin up in the air, so to speak; they begin with the spoken word and the inspiring life. This would be all the more true of any movement which was morally uplifting and spiritually regenerating. Men might dream their dream of the heavenly Christ who is the deeper self of all mankind, but the dream would have little power till they heard that Christ speak with divine authority through human lips. To say they would adore the mystical Christ *first*, do so by name, and then

proceed to invent sweet stories of His advent among men in the guise of a Galilean carpenter is to turn probabilities topsy turvy. The sequence of events would be just the other way about. Given the real Jesus they could come to believe in the mystical Christ and be conscious of His presence in the soul.

The late Father Tyrrell's posthumous book, *Christianity at the Cross Roads*, joined issue with liberal Protestantism on this very ground. By liberal Protestantism the author must have meant Unitarianism as commonly understood; he could not mean the Christianity taught from this pulpit. Modernism, he maintained, was not this liberal Protestantism, and he might have said the same of your religious faith and mine. The Jesus of the New Testament, he declared, according to the findings of the most thorough-going criticism of the Christian sources, is not merely the good man who has no consciousness of being anything more; he believes himself divine, the Christ eternal, one with God. As to ourselves, continues the great modernist, though we do not possess this consciousness, the fact that Jesus had it ennobles our conceptions of the possibilities of our own being. "We simply do not know what our own spirits are," but ought we to think of them more meanly than Jesus thought of our relationship to Him, and His to God?

A few weeks later, though of the precise date I cannot be sure, I preached another sermon

on the same subject from the text, "Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God" (1 John iv. 2). At the risk of being prolix and engaging in some amount of repetition I subjoin the following extracts from it. I prefer to let them stand as they were originally spoken rather than excise from them the statements which cover the same ground as the passages quoted above.

This is a strange saying, especially when we consider that it was written sufficiently early to find a place in the New Testament. Apparently it was quite possible, even as near to the beginnings of Christianity as this, for persons calling themselves Christians to deny that Jesus Christ had come in the flesh—that is, had ever lived a true human life. That such an attitude was possible only goes to show how lowly and unpretentious were the beginnings of the faith. These people could not have denied the earthly life of Jesus if that life had made a great stir in the world while it was being lived. The persons here alluded to were probably a sect of the Gnostics—of whom there were many sects—or some cult allied to them in opinion. By denying that Jesus Christ had come in the flesh they must have meant one of two things—either His life in the body was an appearance only, and not a flesh-and-blood existence, or He had never been on earth at all. We know that among early Christian heresies the former of these alternatives



was actually taught. It was held that the eternal Son of God was a heavenly being, and as such could not be made to suffer as mortals have to do through being conditioned by the flesh; even His crucifixion was not real suffering and death; it only appeared to be such; divinity could not suffer. On the other hand, as I have just said, there were no doubt some who maintained that the Christ had never been on earth at all save as He lived in the hearts of His followers. It is to these, perhaps, that my text more specially refers.

You will admit, I am sure, that this is rather striking. Here, almost at the starting-point of the life of the Christian Church, we have some Christians—or people who claimed to be Christians—who did not believe, and did not feel it necessary to believe, that their Lord and Master had ever lived as a man among men. Of course it was not long before the majority put them right on that point by making it into an article of faith and reciting it as a creed: “Who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made man.” This in time became the universally held belief of the Christian Church, but, as we see, it was not always so. It is, indeed, a very remarkable thing that in the New Testament itself there should be an allusion to quasi-Christian teachers who knew nothing of the Galilean ministry or the home at Nazareth, and who were firmly convinced that the Christ they worshipped had never lived on earth as a human being.

The reason I have drawn attention to the fact this morning is this: It seems as though this belief of eighteen, or perhaps nineteen centuries ago—or something very like it—were reviving again in our midst. Not so very many years ago, as most of you can remember, the cry of the more advanced spirits in the religious world was “Back to Jesus.” We were bidden to look for the Man of Galilee, the true Jesus, beneath all the trappings wherewith ecclesiasticism had hidden Him for ages. And from time to time the announcement was made that we had found Him. Such books as Professor Seeley’s *Ecce Homo* and Rénan’s *Life of Jesus* had an enormous circulation and exercised an immense influence in the simplifying of Christian thought. What these books showed us was a winsome though majestic figure, grandly human, one of ourselves but gifted with an insight into the ways of God such as no son of man has ever possessed in like measure before or since. Of course this was not the Christ of the Church, but liberal thinkers cared little for that; they were tired of dogma, tired of the ecclesiastical mind, and tired of the antagonism between both of these and the new “enthusiasm of humanity”—to quote *Ecce Homo*—which was beginning to be preached everywhere. They were glad to have discovered, or to think they had discovered Jesus, the Elder Brother of the struggling, suffering, aspiring human race.

But the still newer school to which I have just referred is breaking in upon our contemplation

of this ideal by telling us that it is but a dream. This Jesus, they say, is not to be found in the New Testament, and, if not, where else are we to look for Him? The Jesus of the New Testament, says Dr. Anderson, for instance, is "a divine person," at any rate he is not a human person in any sense that can properly be called human. He is the Creator of the world, and comes down from heaven to save it when it goes wrong. Even in the simplest gospel accounts He is never less than supernatural, never belongs to the plane on which the rest of us are at home. We may call "Back to Jesus" as loudly as we please, but we cannot get farther back than the New Testament, and the Christ of the New Testament is not the Christ of *Ecce Homo*, much less of Rénan, He is a God. I hope I am doing no injustice to this group of scholars if I add that, so far as I can make out, they admit the possibility that there may have been a real Jesus who set the ball of Christianity rolling, so to speak, but they contend that He was soon lost to sight in the worship of a divine person, a heavenly Christ, a spiritual ideal with whom He could have had little in common. Dr. Anderson in particular goes on to urge that it is this heavenly Christ with whom we really have to do, and with whom the Christian church has had to do all along. He is no imaginary figure; He is the very root of our being; He is that of God which is manifesting in man, and is the goal of all our spiritual aspiration and the object of all our religious endeavour. There is no need to

lay any stress on a supposed historic Christ of nineteen hundred years ago; the ever-present Christ, the heavenly Christ, the indwelling Christ, is enough for all our religious life; but He has never lived an earthly life in any one individual human body; the New Testament story of the doings of Jesus is the product of the pious imagination.

But, admitting frankly all the force there is in this way of stating what we know to be a fact, the fact that it is the Christ of faith, the Christ not after the flesh, with whom we to-day have our spiritual relations, let me say emphatically that I take my stand by the side of the man who wrote this passage of Scripture, and add that I want Jesus too. I cannot rest satisfied with any new Gnosticism or Docetism that would rob me of Christ manifest in the flesh. You may say that we have Christ manifest in the flesh wherever we see human nature filled and possessed by divine love, and I gratefully agree. The world is poor and sad indeed, but it would be immeasurably poorer and sadder if we could find nothing of Christ in the human souls that dwell in it. Praise be to God, there is no spot on earth so dark but that some glimmer of the light of Christ is to be found there. A few weeks ago I was walking along a somewhat secluded pathway in Switzerland upon which apparently the light of the sun seldom shone. The bare stones at the side permitted little opportunity to vegetable growth, but one's eye was arrested immediately by the presence of one solitary blood-red flower

which held its ground bravely in a tiny cleft of rock. I thought of it as a figure of many a holy life that is being lived in the dark places of the earth at the present time, a figure of the love of God revealed in His children's acceptance of the cross; wherever you see the blood-red flower of sacrifice you see Christ. But that is not all I want. I want the fellowship of Him in whom men saw, in days gone by, "the fulness of the Godhead bodily." I quite admit that there are many aspects of life which Jesus never touched, and which no Galilean of His time ever could have touched, but it seems to me utterly unreasonable to say that faith in a God-filled earthly life could ever have sprung only from men's pathetic imaginings of what they would like to see instead of what they did see. That is not the way I read history; it is not the way I see history being made now.

Before either of the foregoing—in fact, if I remember rightly, before the publication of Drews' book itself—I preached a sermon on Vision of Christ which shows that the issue above discussed was already beginning to be sharply defined. The text was, "Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?" (1 Cor. ix. 1).<sup>1</sup> I take the following paragraphs from it.

At the present time, as many of you are doubtless aware, criticism of the Christian sources is passing through a new phase. The

<sup>1</sup> Preached in the City Temple, January 9, 1910.

question of first importance is no longer that of the authenticity of particular books of the Bible, but the historicity of the Founder of Christianity Himself. Was there ever any such person as Jesus? is a question which is being asked, not so much by scoffers and unbelievers as by scholarly men of deep religious convictions, and in not a few instances a negative answer is being given to it, or, perhaps, it would be truer to say the conclusion arrived at is that, whether there were such a person or no, He has had practically no influence on the development of Christianity. Some time ago a friend of mine asked a literary man of some distinction to state succinctly what, in his judgment, Jesus has done for humanity. The response was rather startling. "Jesus has done nothing for humanity," wrote the person interrogated, "but humanity has done a good deal for Jesus. It has loaded upon Him, from age to age, its own pathetic imaginings as to what ought to constitute the ideal man; it has deified this, and worshipped it passionately; from age to age, and race to race, the portrait has varied according to the needs of the situation; the Jesus of popular belief has not been by any means a consistent figure throughout." This dictum, without doubt, represents what a large number of cultured people in this country, and other Christian countries, think about the reverence paid to the name of Jesus. Some think it possible that He may, indeed, have lived and taught, suffered and been crucified, but they do not believe that we can now obtain any really reliable facts con-



cerning Him; what Christendom worships under His name, they maintain, is an idealised figure who may have no more connection with the original than the United States of to-day resembles the Germania of Tacitus. Every fresh generation invents its Divine Man and calls Him Jesus.

Of late, too, the subject of discussion has been developing rapidly. There is a school of critics whose work is influencing minds so diverse as that of my friend Dr. Anderson of Dundee, on the one hand, and those of orthodox writers like Dr. James Denney on the other. To these I might add the late Father Tyrrell, who has left a book behind him in which the influence of this new development is plainly apparent. Roughly speaking, the conclusions put forward by this school are as follows : No matter how far we go back in our examination into Christian origins, we never come upon the simple human Jesus of liberal Protestantism. Outside the New Testament, contemporary evidence as to His life and work is non-existent, and the very earliest Christian literature, the literature of the sub-apostolic age, assumes that He was a supernatural person. Nowhere have we any such detailed account of His doings as would warrant us in putting Him in the same category with other great religious masters of men. We know a good deal about Buddha, for instance; in spite of a lavish intermixture of legend and fable we are able to obtain a fairly clear outline of his life and character. It is the same with Mahomet, Zoroaster, St. Francis

of Assisi. Many marvellous things have gathered round the personality of the leader and teacher in each case, but the whole life is before us and its historicity is well authenticated.<sup>1</sup> Not so with Jesus; He takes no part in the history of His time; is quite unknown outside the petty subject state in which He is born; and, so far as the brief Christian records themselves go, He never was regarded by His followers as a human being in the same way as the personal forces I have just named were human beings. Always He is represented as someone supernatural.

Here, then, is a paradox. The world in which Jesus must have lived, if He lived at all, knew practically nothing about Him; only a few Galileans, mostly uneducated, believed in Him—so the New Testament tells us—but their belief in Him went far beyond ordinary loyalty to a spiritual teacher; they believed in Him as something more than human. What a perplexing contradiction! And when we come to the experience of such a man as the writer of my text we have something more remarkable still. This Paul had never seen Jesus in the flesh at all, so far as we have any information; when he says he has seen Him he means that he has seen Him in vision—not as He was on earth, but as He is in heaven. All through his writings he evidently looks upon Jesus, not so much as an ideal human being, as a superhuman being. To Paul, Jesus was, not a man among men, but the source of humanity itself, the Word by whom the worlds

<sup>1</sup> This might be open to question in the case of Gautama.

were made. He tells us nothing about the carpenter of Nazareth.

It is the recognition of these things which is forcing some of the honest religious minds of our time to ask whether an historic outstanding personality at the beginning was really necessary to Christianity. They doubt whether there ever was a Jesus—that is, a Jesus who was the actual originator of the Christian religion. They think it more probable that the Christ of faith was worshipped from the first and that He never wore a human form. Others, such as Father Tyrrell, deduce from the same set of facts the conclusion that there was indeed a Jesus, but that He Himself believed that He was different from the rest of humanity not only in degree but in kind. “Ye are from beneath; I am from above,” say these devout critical students of Christian origins, represents Jesus’ own thought about His personality, as well as that of the primitive church. Father Tyrrell goes so far as to assert that this consciousness of Jesus concerning Himself was quite consistent with a full acceptance of all the characteristic prepossessions of His time and race about the apocalyptic second coming, the Satanic dominion of this world, and so on. He almost makes Jesus a sort of obsessed fanatic in His insistence upon those things. The Son of Man of popular Jewish belief was a vague figure, about whom various theories were held; and, according to Father Tyrrell, Jesus held that He was the Son of Man simply in the sense that He had come from

heaven, and that His mission was to institute the Kingdom of God on earth not by a slow spiritual process, but by a tremendous catastrophe. He believed, continues the modernist writer, that His own sacrificial death was a necessary preliminary to this miraculous catastrophe because it would fill up the cup of the world's iniquity and bring conflict between heaven and earth to an immediate culmination. With this conviction in His heart He deliberately went up to Jerusalem at the close of His ministry in order to force the issue with the authorities and practically compel them to kill Him; He did this with the equally firm conviction that He would almost instantly return from the further side of death at the head of the hosts of heaven and inaugurate with a mighty hand the Kingdom whose speedy advent it had been His previous mission to declare.

You will not be surprised to hear me say that in this piece of description I cannot recognise the Jesus I have been accustomed to preach or in whom most of us have believed. One can see what has led Father Tyrrell to take this ground. It is precisely the same set of critical results that has led Dr. Anderson and others to take the ground that there was no Jesus at the beginning of Christian history, or rather, that we have no access through the Christian records to any Jesus who can properly be described as human and real; that it is the Christ of faith, the pathetic invention of devout religious fancy, with whom we are dealing from the first. All things con-

sidered, I would rather be compelled to accept this alternative than Father Tyrrell's. His Christ appears to me to have come perilously near to being a crazy enthusiast, great and sincere, perhaps, but altogether too small for the part His name has played in the spiritual development of mankind. If the real Jesus were this, then by all means let us fall back on the Christ whose feet have never touched the ground, the Christ who is the changing embodiment of men's dreams of the spiritual ideal, the Christ who is our symbol for the God-Man of human aspiration. It is but just to add, and I gladly do so, that, in the Christian experience of men such as I have named, this Christ of faith is no fancy, but the guiding reality of life. Behind the best humanity that has ever yet found manifestation is a primordial humanity that was with the Father before the world was, from whom we have all come forth, towards whom we all yearn, and in whom we are all one. There are some who love and worship that Christ, feeling His presence with them day by day, who can never be equally sure that they have found Him in the Jesus of the New Testament.

But not for a single moment would I concede either that this was the real Jesus or that there was no Jesus; not for a single moment would I deny the Jesus of the past in declaring my allegiance to the Christ of the present. The Jesus of modern liberal Christianity is not so easily disposed of as all that. I am of those who believe they can see a divine figure at the be-



ginning of Christian history who, despite the misrepresentations and prepossessions of His reporters, is neither a mistaken visionary nor a pious fancy of later times. As I have said before, I am not concerned to prove Him ideally immaculate or even to discuss whether such a thing could be, apart from the perfection of the whole race or outside of the infinitude of God. But what I do insist upon is that the source of the swelling flood of spiritual life which has flowed down the centuries from the tiny Galilee of nineteen centuries ago was a gracious and magnificent personality of amazing force and moral loftiness. This Jesus was just as real as you or I, and vastly greater. It was He who made the Christ idea a living factor in the spiritual evolution of mankind : but for Him it would have vanished along with the thousand myths and superstitions of past ages ; He made it throb and glow with divine energy. If to-day we adore the Christ of faith it is because the Jesus of history gave Him a body and a soul. I need not repeat the reasons I have previously given in speech and writing for this conviction ; but I adhere to it more strongly than ever ; it seems to me incredible that the most potent, lasting, uplifting, regenerating religious movement the world has ever known should have begun in the vain imagining of a few ignorant folk who managed to persuade themselves that a divine man had tabernacled for awhile in human flesh, though they themselves had never seen Him. We are asked to believe that a divine madness



seized hold of multitudes because of this gradually growing tale, but that no one could point to the actual inventor or say why and how it was set going. This is not the way human nature works now, and it is improbable that it was radically different in the past. We may overlay our heroes with trappings of legend and wonder-story, but we do not invent the heroes themselves; it is the impulse that comes from them that sets the poetic imagination going and weaves their personalities into the spiritual texture of days to come. Like Paul, though I have never seen Jesus in the flesh, I can see Him in what He has wrought; I can see Him in the stream of which He was the spring; I can see Him in the more artless, natural, and unstudied accounts of His doings that have come down to us from those who stood nearest to His earthly life; perhaps one can even see Him best in what these recorders do not seem to have considered of first importance and best worth preserving. It is to me a truly amazing thing that academic theories can so blind the vision of able men to reasonable probabilities that their vision of Christ blots out the face of Jesus. For my own part, the precise opposite would be nearer the truth. One might, perhaps, dispense with the abstract Christ, or, rather, with the perplexing doctrines that have been spun around Him, but one cannot dispense with the Jesus who made the Christ live. He is there all the time, half-hidden in what has been said about Him, greatly mysterious, but strong, true, wonderful, the being

who has consecrated for all time suffering willingly accepted as the means of uniting man and God. If the religious imagination were wanting to invent a saviour it would not begin by nailing Him on a cross.

Thus far the cleavage of opinion went in the ranks of the religious liberals with whom I was associated at the beginning of 1910. My own position in regard thereto is sufficiently indicated above. But matters could not rest there. A further development was inevitable.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE NEW THEOLOGY : THE PARTING OF THE WAYS

THE cleavage soon grew wider, and by the beginning of 1911 it had become obvious to me that the problem thus raised was too serious to be relegated to a secondary place. I was continually pressed by my people, and by readers of my sermons generally, to deal with the subject in a definite pronouncement and give reasons for my own attitude. I did so in the following dissertation, spoken from the City Temple pulpit to my Thursday morning city congregation on January 26th. Even at the possible cost of wearying my readers I have thought it best to include it in full, exactly as it originally appeared.

In obedience to many requests, and in fulfilment of a promise made from this pulpit a few weeks ago, I wish to say something this morning upon the subject of the Christ Myth controversy which has been raised once more in Germany and whose echoes are being heard in this country. I assume that you all know something of the main issue in that controversy. Briefly put, it is the question whether any such person as Jesus

Christ has ever existed in the flesh, or whether the belief in Him as an historical figure is merely the dramatised expression of a certain spiritual experience, the soul's experience of communion with God under one specialised aspect—the aspect known as the mystical Christ of Christian faith. That is the issue, and, as you will readily admit, it is one in which the most opposite views may be taken, and are being taken, by profoundly religious and spiritually minded men. I confess that I enter upon the discussion of it this morning somewhat reluctantly, for I am anxious to avoid controversy, and I may as well tell you frankly at the outset that nothing will induce me to reply to anyone who differs from me in the conclusions at which I have arrived on this subject. All I want to do is to state my own belief, and the reasons why I hold it, and leave them to your judgment.

Further, let me clear the ground by saying this: I am quite conscious of the impossibility of disposing of a theme so vast and complex as the one before us in the course of a forty minutes' address; one can do no more than touch upon its outstanding features and leave subsidiary matters alone. Quite sufficient can be said even within the limits of an ordinary discourse to indicate the main reasons for or against a particular point of view.

The case of the upholders of the myth theory as being sufficient to account for the rise of Christianity without the necessity of postulating an historical Jesus is in substance as follows—(I

refer more particularly to the recent work of a German philosopher, Professor Drews, but the statement applies in greater or less degree to the whole school he represents). The idea of a Messiah, or Christ, a supernatural being who comes into this world to save humanity from its ills and unite it to God, is much older than Christianity and has been associated with many admittedly non-historical names. Thus, Mithras, a supposed incarnation or expression of the sun-god, the eternal source of life and light, was at one time so extensively worshipped as to be able to dispute with early Christianity the conquest of the Roman empire itself, and with it the whole western world. Mithras worship was of Persian origin, and Persia had been influencing Jewish religious conceptions for five centuries before Christianity was born. In the cult of Mithras were included some of the ideas which are now popularly believed to have been peculiar to and most characteristic of the Christian revelation, such as the apocalyptic kingdom of God, the Resurrection, and the Last Judgment. Then in Greek thought we get the idea of a divine Mediator, or Logos, through whom God produces and sustains the universe—an idea which in my opinion has still a considerable religious value. This Logos was personified in various ways in Greek cults and mystery worship at the beginning of the Christian era, as, for example, in the Orphic rites. The name Jesus, too, according to the authorities whose view I am now stating, appears in various forms as that of the pre-

Christian cult-god. Joshua, for instance, the leader under whom the Israelites were said to have conquered Canaan, says Professor Drews, "is apparently an ancient Ephraimitic God of the Sun and Fruitfulness" (an unsupported assumption), and Joshua simply means Jesus. There are many other signs, he maintains, that Joshua or Jesus was the name by which the Jews most frequently designated their expected Messiah, because the word Jesus means saviour or healer. He identifies the important pre-Christian sect called the Essenes with this name—that is "Jesseness" (another unprovable assumption), believers in the God Jesse or Jesus. The very idea of a suffering Messiah, which Christians have been taught to regard as unheard of before the crucifixion of their Master, and as altogether intolerable to the Jews, who rejected Jesus on that account, was, as a matter of fact, one of the commonest in the ancient world. It appears in the religions of Babylon, Egypt, and Greece, over and over again, not to speak of many other faiths and nationalities; the Jews must have been thoroughly familiar with it. The same is true of the various incidents related in the New Testament concerning the Nativity and childhood of Jesus. No doctrine is more ancient than that of the virgin birth of the king of heaven; and everything connected with that birth—the song of the angels, the adoration by the Magi, the massacre of the innocents, and the flight into Egypt—has its parallel in older faiths, from India westward. Even the beautiful Christmas idyll



of the Holy Child, whose birthplace was a stable and cradle a manger, is anticipated in its most essential features in the Buddha and Krishna myths. It is—I am not now quoting anyone in particular, but giving a general statement of the views of the whole school of critics with whom we are concerned—a symbolic presentation of the cosmic phenomenon of the re-birth of the sun at the beginning of the new year. Thus, the Cretan Zeus was born in a cavern, Mithras and Hermes in a gloomy grotto, Horus in a stable—that is, in the constellation of the Ox through which the sun passes after the winter solstice. As to the symbols of the Messiah, the Lamb and the Cross, both of these are as old as the oldest historic religion. The Lamb, “agnus,” is said to be a figure of the god of fire, “Agni.” The Cross is not essentially a symbol of suffering, but of the blazing sun, whose rays are of cruciform shape. That self-offering is associated both with the Lamb and the Cross is natural enough when we consider what the forth-pouring of the light of the sun means in the life of the world; he is perpetually dying and rising again, not only in the heavens, but in everything that lives on the earth. What more likely than that the thoughtful religious minds of antiquity should see in these natural phenomena a visible representation of a deeper kind of cosmic fact, the fact of the self-offering of God in and for the soul of man? But it is a fact which cannot be exclusively associated with any one historical person, or, indeed, with any historical person whatsoever.

But it is when we leave these extra-Christian parallels to, or rather anticipations of, the Christian Christ, and come to what specific Christian sources have to tell us of Jesus, that the case I am presenting acquires most force. According to Professor Drews and others, it is Paul, not Jesus, who is the real creator of Christianity. Paul found the belief in a Jesus-God already existing throughout Asia Minor, and, embracing it with the whole force of his nature as satisfying his religious needs, established it by his genius in a permanent position which it never would otherwise have occupied. The principal authority I have just quoted makes the very questionable statement that only the epistles to the Romans, Corinthians, and Galatians can be considered of Pauline authorship, if, indeed, Paul ever wrote any of the letters which now stand in his name. He then goes on to insist that Paul not only has no interest in the historical Jesus, but never really believed in him; that, as a matter of fact, none of the Pauline utterances refer to an actual person who had lived on earth, but to the eternal Son of God who is born, suffers, dies, and rises in glory in human life as a whole. Then, as to the Jesus of the gospels : after ruling out the fourth, which practically all expert critics admit to be a doctrinal treatise instead of a biography, there remain only Matthew, Mark, and Luke as sources of information concerning what the Master is believed to have done and said. Here is the main battle-ground. These gospel stories, so

the school of critics whose views I am stating roundly declares, are no more narrations of fact than those contained in the Gospel of John; nowhere do they afford us a glimpse of a truly human personality; Jesus, as presented in these stories, is simply unintelligible; no such being could ever have existed. The conclusion arrived at by Professor Drews and all who think with him, therefore, is that the Jesus of the New Testament is a product of the religious imagination, an ideal, a symbol, and that the belief in Him is of the same order as the beliefs concerning the non-Christian Christs I have just been mentioning: Mithras, Osiris, Krishna, Apollo, and the rest.

Lack of time must be my excuse for not stating at greater length the arguments for this conclusion, but I hope you will agree that I have at least stated it frankly and fairly, suppressing nothing that would tell materially in its favour. I will go farther and acknowledge with readiness that the particular group of scholars I have in mind is composed of men who, unlike many who have previously denied the historicity of Jesus, do so because they believe intensely in the existence of a real living Christ, a God-man, an eternal divine being who is the source of humanity itself and "by whom all things consist." This is a most valuable point which ought not to be lost sight of in our estimate of their work. They do not believe that this Christ is merely an idea; He is to them a fact—indeed, the fact of facts—without which it would be impossible to account

for human nature or our presence in this world. This is something comparatively new, and very striking, in the history of critical attacks upon the Christian sources. It is not all negative; it is mainly affirmative; it is, in fact, a strong reassertion of the thing that is most vital to the Christian religion—namely, unhindered communion with the Christ of faith. But they hold that, instead of looking for this Christ of faith in someone called Jesus who lived long ago, we should look for Him in every human heart and in the cumulative spiritual experience of the whole human race.

Will you now allow me to state, as briefly and clearly as I can, my reasons for dissenting from the merely negative side of the critical views we have been surveying, while giving a cordial endorsement to the positive? After that, I will submit to you one or two considerations, not of a critical character, which have done most to confirm me in my belief in the historicity of Jesus of Nazareth, who, in my experience, is inseparable from the eternal Christ.

In the first place, I deny that the antiquity of the Christ-idea, or any aspect of it, no matter with what name or religion it has been previously associated, is a presumption against belief in an actual historical Jesus who, for all time, has made it a living force in the spiritual evolution of mankind. Why on earth should we concede any such thing? The fact points to the exact contrary. We ought reasonably to expect that an idea so sublime, born of a spiritual necessity

so deep, should have been adumbrated ages before it was concentrated in the personality of our Lord Jesus Christ. So far from being concerned at its anticipation in so many ways and in so many nations before Jesus was born, I rejoice that it was so; it simply demonstrates with enormously added force the necessity and universality of the Christian gospel in its historic setting. Why has the Christian Christ survived and absorbed into Himself all the devotion formerly given to these various pagan christs? Why? because Christianity has been able to proclaim not only a living Christ, but a living Jesus. "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us." "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life . . . that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you." This is the real reason why Christianity has prevailed over its rivals and predecessors; it had a Christ of faith to offer who was not only the fulfilment of the best that the spiritual minds of antiquity had ever dreamed, but an historic personality who was equal, and more than equal, to the expression of that ideal in terms of a single human life. Now I venture to challenge all the negative criticism of the Christian sources that has yet seen the light to explain away this one fact if it can. Why in the name of all that is reasonable should Christianity be the one faith with spiritual force enough in it to overthrow the Pantheon of old Rome



and establish itself on the ruins of the innumerable cults which competed for supremacy in western civilisation in the early centuries of our era? Why, indeed? It had no imposing advantages; its adherents belonged in the main to the poorer classes; they were despised and ridiculed by the intellectuals, even when they were not persecuted by the State. There was nothing in their favour so far as worldly opportunity was concerned. They succeeded by one thing and one thing only, and that was the loftiness and purity of their religious ideal coupled with their intense devotion to the person of their Lord. These facts did not arise out of nothing; they never do; they are always the fruit of personality. It is not abstract ideas which make history; it is ideas embodied in personality. Whose was the personality that communicated the original impetus to the Christian religion, starting it on a spiritual level high enough to ensure its victory over all other so-called Christ-cults of the west? Whose? Certainly not Paul's, for it was there before Paul, and Paul's own devotion to the personality needs accounting for; it did not arise out of an impersonal enthusiasm with nothing behind it but the apostle's own imagination; it was born of something real and definite, something so strong and overpowering as to revolutionise Paul's whole being. Is there any need to argue the question? Why go behind the testimony of the first Christians themselves? The personality to whom they owed their spiritual quickening, the elevation of their idea of Christ,



and their invincible confidence in the spirituality of life and the final victory of the good, was that of Jesus of Nazareth. I repeat then, that, so far from the antiquity of the Christ idea being a bar to the belief in the historical Jesus, it immensely strengthens the latter; it shows what the world wanted and was feeling after; it only needed the advent of a transcendent personality, a true divine manhood, to set that idea aglow and make it the mighty spiritual force we know it to be now. This conclusion appears to me inevitable; and one thing is certain—it cannot be overthrown by any of the evidence which has been adduced up to the present; indeed, as I have just said, the main argument of the supporters of the myth theory tells exactly the other way.

As to Paul's specific contribution to Christianity, I am more than willing to admit the substantial truth of all that Professor Drews and those who agree with him argue concerning the mystical nature of the great apostle's experience of his relationship to Christ. I have taught it myself for a good many years. It is unmistakable that in some of Paul's finest utterances he is thinking of the whole drama of redemption as taking place within the soul of the believer. Thus: "Our old man is crucified with Him that the body of sin might be destroyed"; "if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him;" "we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another;" "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature;" "I am crucified with Christ:

nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me;” “God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, whereby the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world.” All these sayings are of the mystical order; they would be as true of an inner experience, without any objective fact to which to relate them, as they would be if Paul had been one of the band of disciples who followed Jesus during His earthly ministry. Unquestionably, too, Paul borrowed a good deal of his theological imagery from non-Christian sources such as those I have already indicated. No doubt he was well acquainted with most of them; he could hardly fail to be so. All the existing conceptions about the dying and rising God, the apocalyptic kingdom, the Resurrection, the Last Judgment, the Divine Mediator, and the like, must have been quite familiar to him; they were in the air; he lived and moved amongst them, and was almost compelled to do his religious thinking in terms of them. But to say that he did not himself believe in Jesus as an historical person to whom to relate them is sheer nonsense, and the fact that such an assertion can be made only shows to what length a preconceived theory will carry intelligent men. It is untrue that the consensus of New Testament scholarship amounts to a denial of the authenticity of all Pauline epistles except those I have already mentioned; to say that he was the author of none is an unwarrantable assumption without a shadow of proof; it is criticism run mad.

But even if we confine ourselves to the epistles

which Professor Drews and his school admit to be Paul's, if Paul wrote anything, even an untutored eye can see that the apostle is writing of a Christ whom he believes to have lived on earth as a man, and that in his own lifetime. In the very interesting account of his call to preach given in the first chapter of Galatians, he mentions both Peter and "James, the Lord's brother" as persons with whom he consulted. The plain man would say that here is a narrative of plain fact which is either true or untrue, and the way in which Professor Drews tries to explain it away is fantastic in the extreme. It seems that the "Lord's brother" did not mean a real brother, but was merely a figure of speech to denote a certain grade in the Christian society! Or else the passage is a deliberate insertion in the narrative to make it appear that Paul knew the family of Jesus! Exactly; as soon as the New Testament facts refuse to fit in with our critic's theory they are to be brushed aside without reason given. Peter, he gravely assures us, is a mere phantom in this place as elsewhere. So the extremely lifelike account in the very next chapter of Paul's opposition to Peter on account of his attitude on the question of circumcision, goes for nothing, because it does not suit Professor Drews! "When Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of

the circumcision." These are awkward statements for those who try to make out that Paul had no first-hand knowledge of the real Jesus through those originally associated with Him, so the negative critics calmly excise them. This will not do; it is not criticism, but groundless speculation, which should carry no weight with any unbiassed mind. The unassailable testimony of those Pauline writings, the genuineness of which the extremest criticism has not yet managed to disprove, is that Paul did know face to face the men who were the first preachers of the gospel of Jesus, including the Master's own kinsfolk. It was, therefore, to an historic personality that his allegiance was first given when he entered upon his vocation as a Christian preacher, and it was around this historic personality that he wove all his later experience of the risen Christ.

Into the question of gospel criticism I shall not enter this morning, nor is there urgent need to do so. The Pauline epistles are earlier than the gospels in their present form, and these alone are quite sufficient to demonstrate the fact that the primitive Christian society began with, and as the outcome of, the work of an historical person who can only be identified with the Jesus of the gospels. It is a disputable point whether the Jesus of Matthew, Mark, and Luke is a consistent figure, so clearly portrayed as to be recognisable as such. The widely different interpretations of His character and aims which are being given by trained interpreters of the gospel

sources even to-day, render it impossible to pronounce a final verdict with certainty. I will only say this : that, broadly speaking, the Christian idea of Jesus has presented certain unchangeable features, and none of these have been destroyed by anything that criticism has yet advanced. Majesty combined with humility, strength with gentleness, infinite love with inflexible sternness in the treatment of wrong—these are elements in the character of Jesus which have persisted through all the ages in what His followers have believed about Him, and these are the very qualities which stand out most clearly in the gospel accounts of Him, whatever else may be there. Recollect, too, that these were not qualities which were universally accepted as admirable at the time when Christianity first appeared; they had to win their way in the teeth of opposition and contempt. Readers of such a work as Lecky's *History of European Morals* will not need to be reminded that the Christian character type had to measure itself against and overthrow moral standards which claimed to be superior. It is hard for us to realise this, but if we can realise it in some degree it will serve to show how striking and distinctive is the gospel portrait of the Master, after all. It would not be so wonderful now as it was then, for nineteen hundred years of Christianity have effected a drastic change in men's ideas of what constitutes moral excellence. More I need not say.

In conclusion let me give you in a few sentences two strong reasons why I myself cling to the Jesus



of history as being one with the Christ of faith. The first is that, as I said from this pulpit a week or two ago, I feel that I know Jesus as Jesus. The Jesus of glory is to me a living being dwelling with me day by day, and guiding and directing me in the work I am trying to do. Jesus Christ is central for my spiritual life : I worship Him, and I trust my soul to Him. I admit that this is a purely subjective argument, but it is one which is justified by results, and there is abundance of testimony in favour of it. Millions have lived and died before and since Bernard of Clairvaux wrote his famous lines—

“ Jesus, the very thought of Thee  
With sweetness fills my breast;  
But sweeter far Thy face to see,  
And in Thy presence rest ”—

millions who could say the same thing. He is very real to spiritual experience, this Jesus, so real that not all the theorising in the world is going to displace Him from the hearts of those who hold fellowship with Him. This is an argument which no serious student of religion can afford to dismiss with contempt, the argument from experience of continuous communion with a glorified Lord who has lived our life on earth and won the fight which we have yet to win by faith in Him. The religious value of this experience is beyond our power to compute. Nothing could compensate for the loss of it. Without it spiritual life would certainly be poorer; no one in his sober senses would, I imagine, believe that it would be richer; we



should have much to lose and nothing to gain in being deprived of it. Surely this fact alone is presumptive proof of the reliability of its historic basis. Take away from your faith in Christ the belief that that Christ has once been manifested in one transcendent human personality and you have immeasurably weakened its force. The human heart does cry out for a high priest "touched with the feeling of our infirmities"—

"Whose feet have toiled along our pathways rough,  
Whose lips drawn human breath."

I thoroughly agree with the wise saying that if we had never had such a Christ, a Christ after the flesh, we should be craving for one now as the one great need of our earthly life.

And this brings me to the last point, which may be stated thus: If God were to disappoint this craving, if what untold millions have thought, and felt, and prayed concerning the divinely human Master of the race be not the truth, then there is something wrong with the moral government of the universe. The result would be something more than disillusionment: it would be disaster. And what better way could God have chosen for lifting mankind back to Himself than by the sending of one in whom the perfect harmony of divine Sonship and Fatherhood stands fully revealed? Indeed, what other way is there? Someone was needed to break down the middle wall of partition and demonstrate for all time to come that there is no hard and fast dividing line between humanity and deity, but

that when humanity stands at its own highest it towers up into God and can say with a certitude that no evil can hinder or destroy, "I and my Father are one."

This was my last word on the subject of the historicity of Jesus. I did not feel conscious of any need to refer to it again. But henceforth, to my sorrow, I saw that the liberalism with which my name was commonly identified had split upon the rock of Christology. The old deistic liberalism absorbed a certain number of my adherents outside the City Temple, while a smaller group followed Dr. Anderson and those who thought with him. A few months later I preached a sermon on the Christ of the Newer Criticism in which I described the paradoxical situation which had arisen through the conclusions arrived at by the most up-to-date New Testament scholarship. This sermon illustrates, I think, as well as any the direction in which my mind was moving. The following are its most salient paragraphs.

Some time ago, you may remember, I discussed with you the question of the historicity of Jesus with special reference to the Christ Myth controversy now going on amongst biblical scholars and critics. All I did then was to try to show that the critics who maintain that the eternal Christ has never been specially manifested in any one earthly personality have not made out

their case; on the contrary I hold that apart from the historical Jesus our devotion to the eternal Christ could not have been what it is to-day or anything like it; we adore the Christ because He has come to us as Jesus. What should we know about the Christ to-day but for Jesus?

But there is another aspect of this subject on which I did not touch, namely, what the newer criticism, in the hands of those who admit the historicity of Jesus, is telling us about Him. Really this whole field of inquiry, just now, is most interesting and important and everybody ought to know about it. For, understand, the school of critics which maintains that the eternal Christ has never really lived on earth as Jesus is a very small one after all; by far the larger number of representatives of the newer criticism are saying something quite different; they are saying that Jesus really lived, but that He was not at all the kind of person that liberal Protestants, have imagined. Let us briefly examine the situation and you will soon see how the matter stands.

A generation or more ago, as many of you are old enough to recollect, there was a widespread feeling that an unprejudiced examination of the Christian sources would reveal to us a winsome personality, a character of enormous spiritual force, at the beginning of Christian history, but far different from the ecclesiastical Christ, the Christ of dogma as He has been presented to us for many centuries. Quite an enthusiasm arose

for this view. People thought that if they could only get at Jesus Himself, Jesus as He really was, Jesus as He lived and talked amongst the fisher-folk of Galilee nearly two thousand years ago, they would find someone whom they could love and reverence without having to swallow all that has since become traditionally associated with His name. They wanted "the lowly man of Galilee," the sweet teacher of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, and they firmly believed He was there to be found. What they wanted was to disinter His personality from the mass of dogmatic accretions that had gradually been imposed upon it, and then, they were sure, all would be well. For a time this tendency seemed to carry all before it, especially in Germany. We have had a perfect cataract of "Lives of Jesus," studies of Jesus, impressions of Jesus, written by various experts more or less on the lines of Rénan and Seeley. Men like Harnack, Sabatier, and Bousset have familiarised us with a picture of the Master from which all the usual dogmatic accompaniments have been carefully eliminated. It would not be true to say that the Christ of liberal Protestantism, as represented by these authorities, had no divine attributes; but in the main it is unquestionable that they have presented Him to us as the "good man," the God-sent man, the forerunner of a nobler humanity, whose work it was to utter the simple message of divine love, and who was killed for doing it. We were told that even those nearest to Him did not clearly understand

what He was aiming at, and have misrepresented Him in their reports of His words; that He never laid claim to the position since accorded Him in relation to the Godhead; and that His pure spiritual teaching has been overlaid even in the New Testament, and increasingly ever since, with an enormous amount of superstition and irrational assumption derived from other sources and utterly foreign to His mind.

But where are we now? The criticism of the gospel sources thus begun has gone farther than its original promoters ever dreamed. Most reluctantly, little by little, step by step, the newer criticism has been forced to the conclusion that the Jesus of liberal Protestantism has never existed; the real Jesus was a very different being from the fancy pictures of Him painted by Rénan, Seeley, and all their modern imitators. He was not the mildly reasonable teacher, too great for His time, who essayed the vain task of trying to make His generation understand the meaning of the word love; He was far nearer to the ecclesiastical Christ than the modern mind can readily understand. I say that for the most part the critics did not want to arrive at this conclusion. They wanted, and expected to discover, a Jesus who was a sort of anticipation nineteen hundred years ago of a modern Broad Churchman. Against their wills they have been forced to admit that He was quite another sort of person.

Then what sort of a person was Jesus? Remember I am trying to describe the Christ of the



newer criticism. He believed in all that His contemporaries believed concerning the apocalyptic kingdom, the kingdom of God which was to come suddenly by a tremendous invasion from above. He believed in Himself, not as an ordinary human being, but as the Man from heaven, the Son of God, the superhuman instrument, long expected, long foretold, through whom mankind should be brought into right relations with God. He believed He possessed a consciousness of God such as no one else possessed, and that in virtue of that consciousness He could mediate God to the world as no one else could. He believed in His own pre-existence, as a necessary corollary to this position; He declared that He had already enjoyed a dignity and glory with His Father in heaven which He had laid aside in order to come to earth. He believed that He had come to die a death of mysterious efficacy, and that this, and not His teaching, was of principal benefit to mankind. Moreover, He believed that in the new dispensation which would follow upon His death He would be the judge of the human race.

This is Jesus as He emerges from the newer criticism. Was He merely a self-deluded enthusiast? If so, we are forced to the conclusion that the sublimest spiritual movement the world has ever known was the outcome of a madman's dream. No wonder that those who expected to find at the beginning of Christianity a purely spiritual teacher, who made no lofty pretensions of a supernatural kind, are dissatisfied with their



discovery. But all the same I am thankful for it. This Jesus is more nearly what I want than a teacher who was no saviour would have been, and I am far from being alone in saying so even among the most liberal of liberal Christians.

From the foregoing it will be seen that the Christ Myth episode and its consequences had set me to work upon the Christological problem especially in its critical aspects. For the next few years this was the task to which I gave myself most assiduously, as indeed I have done ever since. I have specialised upon it so far as time and opportunity would allow, and some day, God willing, may give to the public the results of my labour and thought thereupon. They may have a certain value for the religious mind, and they may not.

## CHAPTER X

### WITHDRAWAL FROM NONCONFORMITY

IT was not for some time yet that the full implications of what I had thus been learning and expressing became clear to my mind, but an uncomfortable suspicion had already entered it that this question of Christology was determinative of more than I was readily willing to admit. It was the Christ of the Catholic Church that stood forth from the newer criticism of the gospel sources, not the Christ of liberal Protestantism. This was thrust forcibly upon my attention. The alternatives were obvious: Either Jesus was what the Catholic Church said He was or He did not exist; either He was the Man from heaven, a complete break with the natural order of things, the representative of a transcendental order, supernatural, super-rational super-everything, or He was nothing. This was scarcely the Christ of Protestantism at all, whether liberal or conservative. Tyrrell insisted that if He were to come again He would find Himself more at home in the atmosphere of Catholicism, with all its faults, than in that of

Protestantism. Catholicism is not afraid of the supernatural: Protestantism is. Catholicism is consistently apocalyptic in its outlook. It dwells in mystery, breathes that air, recognises and allows for it in all the relations of life. It takes life in its wholeness and views it as having spiritual significance in every part; it does not cleave a wedge between hither and yonder, material and spiritual, earth and heaven. It makes the higher interpret the lower, the lower the medium of the higher. In a word it is sacramental. The ideas and prepossessions of the age in which Jesus lived and the people among whom He dwelt were much more nearly those of Catholic Christendom to-day than of Protestantism; the mental climate in which His work was done was much more nearly that of Francis of Assisi than of Calvin. I make this statement with no controversial import and without begging any question in regard to it. I merely record the conclusion to which I felt obliged to come from a careful study of the evidence available. The eschatological school did at least that for me. Von Soden was my guest for a time during the visit of the German pastors to this country, and from him I acquired a sense of the great importance of the eschatological theory of the significance of our Lord's earthly ministry. I followed this up by a detailed study of the later literature of the

subject, beginning with Otto Pfleiderer and ending with Schweitzer. Schweitzer's book on the *Quest of the Historical Jesus* came into my hands about this time, and though I regarded its thesis as vulnerable at many points, I thought it unassailable in its main contention, that it was utterly hopeless to try to explain Jesus in terms of nineteenth or twentieth century liberal Protestantism. The sane, well-balanced, divinely inspired apostle of sweet reasonableness simply was not there and never had been there. What was there was a being for whom no ordinary human categories exist, and it was this being who had created Catholic Christianity with its perpetual witness to a perfect transcendental order ever invading and revealing itself through the phenomena of the natural order.

Moreover, I have to acknowledge that the reading of Tyrrell's book, *Christianity at the Cross Roads*, marks a definite point of departure in my apprehension of the significance of this discovery. In some degree the book annoyed me because so manifestly a *réchauffé* of Schweitzer in its critical positions, but it made plain to me that the Christ I was preaching was the Christ whom the sacramental system of the Catholic Church presented to mankind as liberal Protestantism neither did nor could. He was undoubtedly right. I came now to my own cross roads. I saw that the Christ I was preaching

was not the Christ in whom liberal Protestants believed, whereas He certainly was the Christ in whom Catholics, Roman and Anglican, believed. It was here that I made the transition, not suddenly or definitely, but slowly and naturally, from the liberal Protestant to the liberal Catholic view of the meaning of Christianity and its message to mankind. It was not a violent wrench; it was rather an opening of my eyes to the nature of my own convictions and where they led. For some years yet I tried to preach this Catholic Christ, holding, as I think my friend Mr. Lloyd Thomas does to this day, that the Catholic Christ was no monopoly of any ecclesiastical system and could be realised in all. Mr. Lloyd Thomas's idea of a Free Catholic Church appealed to me very strongly save and except that I was unwilling to see it identified with any new denomination or group of denominations. I said over and over again publicly and privately that my affinities were not with historic Protestantism but with Catholicism, and that what I wanted was theological freedom combined with such a view of our individual and corporate relation to Christ as the sacramental system of Catholicism had historically given. The futility of this hope became gradually apparent to my perceptions as time went on. Either one must stand within the historic Catholic order or forego the advantages thus desired.

In the meantime I had been breaking new ground in philosophy by making acquaintance with Eucken and Bergson. I read both with deep interest and appreciation, especially the former. I might fairly count myself a disciple of Eucken from 1910 onward. He had none of Bergson's beauty of style, was involved and frequently perplexing, repeated himself *ad libitum* and left many obscurities unexplained, but on the whole in my judgment he did more than any thinker of our time to demonstrate the necessary association of philosophy and religion. Bergson did not do this, and that I suppose is why Rome has placed his works on the Index.<sup>1</sup> I once sent to ask him whether one was justified in considering his system, in so far as it was a system, consistent with theism, but his reply was not encouraging. If, as I strongly hold, the great want of our time in the realm of thought is the reunion of philosophy and theology, the working out of a satisfactory philosophic system on a definitely religious basis after the fashion of scholasticism but with a view to the special needs of our own age, then we owe much more

<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, it must be acknowledged that Bergson, more than any modern thinker, has insisted upon the insufficiency of intellect to discover ultimate truth, and attributes great importance to intuition or spiritual instinct—in a word, faith. It might have been expected that Rome would welcome this remarkable philosophic vindication of one of her most characteristic principles.



as yet to Eucken than to Bergson. Eucken's transcendentalism laid firm hold upon me, and from this time forward I preached it with increasing emphasis. It helped me to assimilate and apply what New Testament criticism was giving me with regard to the person and teaching of our Lord. My sermons of this period and onward struck more and more firmly the note of the distinction between and inter-relation of the natural and the supernatural order in all senses. Bergson's immanentism did not colour my pulpit teaching to anything like the same degree.

One of the bitterest disappointments to me in connection with the world-war is the attitude which Professor Eucken has seen fit to take with reference to our part therein. He maintains—on what grounds it is impossible to understand—that Great Britain is the main cause of it, that the burden of the guilt of having brought it about rests upon the shoulders of her statesmen, and that she has deliberately chosen to throw herself on the side of barbarism as opposed to enlightenment. How in the name of all that is high and holy a man of Eucken's calibre can really think this, especially after the horrors that followed the wanton German attack upon the liberties of Belgium and a thousand barbarities besides, passes my comprehension. It is with deep sadness that I say good-bye to a master;

not in my time, at any rate, will this perversion of a moral judgment be made good. I had obtained tentative promises both from the German and the French savants to visit the City Temple and discourse to my people, but the war put an end to this pleasant prospect as to many other things.

One sermon out of many in which this comparatively new note of insistence upon the transcendental began to be heard in my preaching may be quoted here in illustration of what was taking place. It was an Advent sermon preached in 1911 in the United States, and was on the subject of the Intrusion of the Transcendental, from the text, "Thou shalt . . . bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest" (Luke i. 31). In the course of it I said—

The true explanation of such a passage as my text is that everything great and good, which becomes the common possession of mankind, every special incoming of God into human experience, is prepared in the unseen before it appears in the seen. This sounds a trite observation, but wait a moment. Granted that there is a transcendental world, a world of eternal blessedness and perfection—a fact which my experience no more permits me to doubt than to doubt my own existence—it is in the highest

degree probable, nay, inevitable, that everything worth calling a divine advent, every spiritual uplift which our sunken world receives, is celebrated with joy in heaven before we know anything of it on earth. It is known on that side, and known for what it is, long ere the moment comes for its material manifestation. Do you not see then that such a stupendous event as the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ must have been acclaimed in glory when it was begun, and watched all through its course with close and reverent interest by the host of heaven? Angels did indeed sing around the cradle of the holy child, though perhaps their sweetest song no mortal ear could hear; angels did minister to Him as He lay depleted after His lonely grapple with the tempter in the wilderness, though no mortal eye might behold them; yea, and in dark Gethsemane itself they wiped the blood-drops from His brow, though it may be that even He could not feel them near in that awful hour of dereliction and woe. Such things are not merely pious tradition but literal fact.

And do you think it possible, granting this to be the case, that the woman worthy to be the mother of so august a being, a being destined to change the whole face of human history, could have been left altogether without some intimation beforehand as to the greatness of the privilege that was hers? No one can say with positive assurance just how it may have come to her, but come it did. Lesser women than

she have seen the veil between earth and heaven parted under similar circumstances. In a recent conversation which I had with Sir Oliver Lodge—and which I rather hesitate to quote, but it points the statement which I have just made—I understood him to say that the conclusion to which he has now come with reference to the inter-relation of the visible and invisible worlds makes him feel that there must be truth in the numerous traditions in which history abounds, concerning the portents which have preceded the birth of mighty souls into this world and their passing out of it. He does not think they are all the invention of later generations. I quite agree. No spiritual crisis, no time of new beginnings on earth, can be altogether unaccompanied by some suggestion of the gathering up of forces on the side of heaven.

For who was this Jesus? It can hardly be necessary to tell you again who I think He was—or, to put it more emphatically, who I am sure He was. He was the focalised expression, in terms of one transcendent human personality, of the Christ eternal who is the very basis of our being. According to the New Testament, “Of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things,” and “all things were created by Him and for Him: and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist.” He is that aspect of the infinite being of God which has produced the universe of which we form a part; there may be many more aspects of God’s infinitude, but this is the one with which we have to do.

It is the aspect which philosophers and theologians have for ages called the eternal Son. On the field of time the eternal Son has shown Himself as Jesus. Henceforth to think of the Son of God is to think of Jesus. "He shall be great and shall be called the Son of the Highest." And it is in rising into and partaking of his divine sonship that we find ours. "To as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name." That was what He came for, that is what He is doing still. As F. W. H. Myers beautifully says in his *Human Personality and its Survival of Bodily Death*: "There is nothing to hinder the reverent faith that though we be all the children of the Most Highest, He came nearer than we, by some space to us immeasurable, to that which is infinitely far. There is nothing to hinder the devout conviction that He of His own act took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made flesh for our salvation, foreseeing the earthly travail and the eternal crown." A sentence of that kind is all the more remarkable from the fact that he who wrote it did not come to this conviction along the line of Christian theology, but along that of psychological investigation; and I believe I am right in saying that at the time he penned it he was not a professing Christian himself.

But this position leads to another equally important. Such a divine adventure—if I may so put it—as the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ, such a sublime acceptance of the limita-

tions of the flesh, meant a certain shutting out of the full consciousness of His true dignity in the eternal world. It is impossible for anyone to say what the earthly consciousness of Jesus was concerning Himself, but from what we are told in the synoptical gospels it is evident that it was limited in the same way, though perhaps not to the same degree, as yours and mine. St. Luke says in this same chapter that He "increased in wisdom and stature and in favour with God and man." I wonder how He must have felt when as a boy He used to climb the hills that encircled the village of Nazareth and contemplated in solitude the mystery of existence. What did He feel about Himself when His higher consciousness began to unfold and He began to be aware of the stirring of unfathomable deeps within His soul? Did no awe ever sweep over Him as in His devotions He caught some faint suggestion of a forgotten greatness, a surrendered glory, a world of light and beauty far transcending anything He had ever known in this? Did He ever wonder who He was, ever try vainly to understand His true vocation, and the reason for His presence here, before that solemn moment of illumination came in the baptism of Jordan? All the indications seem to point that way, scanty as may be the information at our command. The late Father Tyrrell in the last book he ever wrote, declares that the secret which Jesus carried about with Him from that day forward was His consciousness of belonging to the transcendental world, of being



the Lord from Heaven of pious expectation, whose mission it was to vanquish evil through suffering, and that He never told this secret till the grand crisis was past.

Professor Sanday, of Oxford, one of the most distinguished of orthodox New Testament scholars, in his recently published, very suggestive study of the personality of the Master, puts forward the hypothesis that the deity of Jesus resided in His sub-consciousness, and that what we would call His waking consciousness, His everyday consciousness, was truly and certainly human. I cannot but feel that both of these theories are more than mere speculations. They fit in with the evidence; they describe just what we ought to expect if it be true, as all the highest spiritual experience has consistently affirmed through all ages, that there is a transcendental world and that a mighty being once left it in order to take upon Himself our burden and help us to win our fight.

In this, and the other extracts from my sermons already quoted, there are certain phrases, such as part of the closing sentence of the last paragraph, which I should hesitate to use now, not because they are heretical but because they are of dubious meaning; they are susceptible of an ambiguous construction. I give them as they were spoken without comment, feeling it to be scarcely necessary.

A book which exercised some influence upon

my thought at this time should here be mentioned. It was Dr. W. L. Walker's *Christian Theism and a Spiritual Monism*. It was published in 1906, but I did not read it till five years afterwards. Dr. Walker's other well-known books, the *Spirit and the Incarnation* and the *Cross and the Kingdom*, I had already made acquaintance with, but I am not aware that they made any very deep impression upon me. He also wrote a book against my views in the midst of the new theology controversy which I thought to be a quite inadequate treatment of the whole subject, and to betray an imperfect understanding of what the new liberalism was aiming at. How I came to read his *Christian Theism and a Spiritual Monism* I do not remember, but I found it very helpful. It clinched the conclusions to which I was being driven by the logic of events, and its chapter on the divine transcendence, short as it was, seemed to me to be a succinct and admirable statement in the simplest terms of what had been implicit in my thinking all along, but had now become definitely explicit. The author's argument as a whole has been treated rather slightly by some critics, but I do not know of any who have seriously set themselves to refute it. Says Dr. Walker—

A Monism, whether “ physical ” or “ spiritual,” which makes no distinction between God and

the World, cannot rise above Pantheism, or really give us *God*. “Monism,” as Science leads us to it, we repeat, applies only to the phenomenal world. Yet there is also a higher, all-embracing Monism. The apparent Dualism that is set up in the initial act of creation is for ever being transcended; it is not an absolute but a strictly relative Dualism, and, as we have said, the evolving world is never separate from God in His transcendency. God is in some degree within it, and it is always contained in His Omnipresence. The seeming Dualism will be completely transcended when the Divine Thought has fully realised itself, when the separate beings to whom the Divine Life has been imparted become one with God.<sup>1</sup>

Discussing our relation to God in his transcendency Dr. Walker adds—

The Divine Life as it has conditioned itself for the sake of creation has so far realised itself in our natural life as spiritual beings. The Divine element that is deepest in the creation is at the foundation of our life, and rises up within us in conscious personal form. For this reason there arises in us what we term “religious aspiration.” Its source is the Divine within us which seeks its fulness of life in the Divine above us. There is in us all, as the deepest principle of our being, an immanent Divine life that seeks its unity or its return to itself in its completeness

<sup>1</sup> *Christian Theism and a Spiritual Monism*, p. 279.

in the unconditioned, transcendent Being, and to raise us, as finite beings, into that life. This is the very essence and meaning of *Religion*. This is why we have "a religious nature," why we seek for "union with God," and "can never rest until we have found Him." In whatever form Religion comes to us, this is its essence—union with God in His Holy Spirit of Truth and Love. The religious aspiration is not something of man merely, but of God, who is at once in some degree immanent in us and also the spiritual environment of our life. Not only do we seek God, but God is in all things seeking us, and as we yield ourselves to His Spirit, we can, in prayer, in spiritual communion, and in life devoted to His purposes and at one with His will, come into real and growing union with God in His transcendency. It is in full ethical and spiritual union with God in His transcendency that the creation finds its completion, and the temporary Dualism is for ever transcended. In this experience spirit returns to itself, and the finite individual life is perfected in God. This complete union with God has only been realised once in time in Jesus Christ, and in its realisation in Him we have the incarnation and revelation of God in Christ.<sup>1</sup>

As a formulated summary of my own position on the subject thus treated I think this paragraph might be allowed to stand. That it does not dispose of all difficulties I am quite aware,

<sup>1</sup> *Christian Theism and a Spiritual Monism*, pp. 285–6.

and that it leaves untouched a vast series of questions which call for consideration is very true also. But as I am not discussing but relating the course of my own mental and spiritual development at a period of crisis and transition, I simply state the facts and leave them. Dr. Walker's book confirmed me in my belief that a true spiritual monism was not inconsistent with a full-hearted acceptance of the Catholic faith concerning the person of Christ and the incarnation. It seems obvious to me, though apparently not to Dr. Walker himself, that the philosophic standpoint indicated above implies the whole Catholic system—but that is a matter I have no right to raise so far as other people are concerned.

In this same year, 1911, though of the precise date I have no recollection, my friend Robert Hugh Benson lent me Charles de Vas's thought-provoking little work, the *Key to the World's Progress*. With the writer's main contention, that the test of the permanence of a civilisation, of its capacity to survive, of its right to be called progressive, was its attitude to the Roman Catholic Church, I had no sympathy. It seemed to me grotesquely untrue. But with much else that he said I found myself in close accord; it rendered vivid what I had been feeling in increasing measure for a long time. The book insisted—if my memory is reliable, as I think it is; I

cannot now lay my hand upon a copy—that there was really no room for indulgence in an optimistic view of human evolution. It pointed out that the soulless utilitarianism and mammon-worship of our modern civilisation, with its glaring injustices and tendency to regard things as making automatically towards betterment, was largely based upon delusion. We were making a fetish of progress without pausing to ask ourselves wherein it consisted. It affirmed that the history of past civilisations did not encourage this too facile optimism on our part. We had no ground for supposing that human society on this earth would ever by the slow process of evolution reach a static condition of happiness and universal moral elevation; not in evolution but in revolution (in the New Testament sense) was still the chiefest hope of our poor sunken race. These are my own words or my own inferences from the author's words, not those of the author himself. They chimed in with much that Eucken had been saying for many years concerning the unsatisfactoriness of modern ideals and the inability of civilisation to say for what it was making. Most reluctantly I was forced to confess this to be the fact so far as my own observation of modern tendencies went, and very terribly has that misgiving been vindicated by the outbreak of the present war. In a sense the war is the inevitable outcome of



the ideals whereby western civilisation has been living, shows what it trusted in, and demonstrates its lack of spiritual consciousness; in another sense it may mean the rectification of these. Are we being saved as by fire?

On September 27, 1911, I preached the first of many sermons in which I took this point of view, urging the inability of society to save itself and the need of salvation from without—in a word of all that is implied in the religion of the Incarnation. The following paragraph indicates the line on which I was going.

A frequent subject of discussion among thoughtful people is the question whether the world is getting any better.

Some say yes and others say no. A recent Roman Catholic writer very rightly points out that any civilisation may be advanced in one way and retrograde in another. The Roman empire under the Antonines, for example, was prosperous and well-governed, but it had lost its individual energy and public spirit, not to speak of literary and artistic taste and productiveness as compared with the palmy days of ancient Greece. The Renaissance of the fifteenth century of the Christian era was, as the name implies, a great outburst of human vigour and joy, a re-birth of interest in the beauty and possibilities of this world; it was a period crammed with the creations of men of all-round genius like Michael Angelo and Benve-

nuto Cellini; great men of letters, giants in politics, mighty pioneers of science and geographical discovery abounded in every country of Christendom; it was an unparalleled awakening and propulsion of man's belief in himself and his destiny. But probably there never has been a period of more extreme depravity in various ways. It was the age of poison and the dagger, of unexampled treachery and cruelty, of unbridled lust and the most cynical egoism. A mere enumeration of the enormities practised daily by every government in Europe at that time is enough to make one stop one's ears in horror. Progress, you see, in one direction was more than counterbalanced by reaction in another; increase in refinement, intellectual activity, and the spirit of enterprise did not prevent men from behaving like devils to one another. And there are not a few able observers who are much inclined to be doubtful of the value of the prevailing tendencies of the age in which we live. Rudolf Eucken, for instance, pronounces modern civilisation a failure and prophesies doom for it unless it can be regenerated by a new infusion of spiritual power. We have made enormous progress on the material plane; we have made less, but still a good deal and are likely to make more, on the plane of social well-being; but is our moral advance, taking men not in the lump but individually, commensurate with what we have achieved in other ways? Frankly, though I am no pessimist, I do not believe it is. During the last nineteen centuries have we

managed to produce the moral superior of the apostle Paul? I need hardly ask whether anyone has yet succeeded in reaching the standard of our Lord Jesus Christ, but I think I might very reasonably ask whether either His Church or the civilisation it has built has even succeeded in understanding Him up to the present.

As a corollary to the above reluctantly formed conviction I had now to give up my semi-Pelagian view of human nature. I had to admit that there was something more to be taken into account than its limitations: there was a factor of disorder somewhere, a principle of corruption. But I was not prepared, and never have been, to accept the pessimistic theory of its depravity taken by Reformation theology and its lineal successors. Am I wide of the mark in saying that sin is not so central to Catholic thought, not so intractable and unrelievedly dreadful, and human nature itself is not regarded as being in so hopeless a condition as historic Protestantism assumes?

But the most important influence that entered my religious life at this period was the study of Baron von Hügel's *Mystical Element of Religion*. This is in my judgment one of the greatest books of the twentieth century thus far, perhaps the very greatest. Conjoined to his masterly essay on *Eternal Life* which appeared some years later it made a profound and lasting impression upon

my mind. His analysis of the intuitional, intellectual, and institutional factors of our total spirit-life, and his showing of their necessary correlation, impressed me as overwhelmingly true. I saw for the first time that the exaggeration of any one of them at the expense of the others had its resultant mischiefs in religion as in all else, that the balance between them must be maintained in order to secure a full all-round development of the whole man and of human society. Though the author did not expressly say so, his exposition revealed to me conclusively that we could no more have Christianity without the Church than we could have life without embodiment in such a world as ours. The question, What and where is the Church? became imperative. It was not a new question to me save in the manner of its formulation. Further, I now recognised unequivocally that it was impossible to divide human life into compartments and say that this had spiritual significance and that had not. Life in its wholeness must be covered, interpreted, and sanctified by religion or else religion is a failure. And just here was where I felt ordinary Protestantism to be most wanting. In what I have to say on this point I am conscious of incurring the danger of rousing antagonism, so let me emphatically disclaim the intention of belittling or misrepresenting anyone else's form of faith. I can but

speak for myself when I say that Protestantism as I knew it best was too subjective. If I may say so without offence it has always had within it a latent Manichæan tendency. The outer world, the world of matter and the senses, has been practically excluded from the purview of religion, been set in opposition to the world of spirit; interest has been withdrawn from the former and concentrated, in theory at least, upon the latter. What has been the result? that in Protestantism a practical dichotomy has been effected of sacred and secular, which has had a most disastrous influence upon the general outlook of the modern world. Catholicism with all its faults, and they are many and grievous, has been saved from this by its very fundamental idea. How to relate religion to life in its entirety is the problem, a problem which I do not think Protestantism, broadly speaking, has solved.

For some time to come I tried my best to meet this difficulty by preaching the sacramentalism of all life—a perfectly true thought—but it did not satisfy me. More and more I felt the need of a spiritual environment wherein that idea was authoritatively recognised and expressed. I began to inquire earnestly into the inwardness of Roman doctrine and discipline. I wanted to see it at work, to get a grasp if I could of its meaning and what it could do in the way of training, guiding, and developing human

character and experience in the lands where it was predominant. To this end I visited Catholic countries and studied the question on the spot. I did not content myself with conversing with the cultured and highly-placed, I talked to the peasantry and the tradesfolk. At Lourdes and among the Basques on the Spanish side of the Pyrenees I found a quality of present-day saintship, a simplicity and unworldliness, that seemed to belong to another age than ours. In France I saw the beginnings of religious revival. In Ireland, especially the south and west, I found amongst all classes a spiritual idealism, a susceptibility to the unseen world and things eternal, that I devoutly wished could be re-communicated to England and English religion generally. I saw many things I did not like, especially in Italy, where religion appeared to be tinged with a grossness, irreverence, and superstition which rendered it most unattractive. This was more the case in the south than in the north, but it was to be found all through. I kept up my intercourse with Roman scholars and ecclesiastics, and read widely in their literature, avoiding the propagandist for the most part. On the whole I think I may say that I came through this period of earnest inquiry and desire to learn with an enhanced respect for the vitality of Roman Catholic religion, but not with any greater desire to associate



myself therewith. My experience on one important point was almost the opposite of that related by Monsignor Benson in his *Confessions of a Convert*. He says that his travels abroad made him realise the provincialism of the Church of England, her comparative isolation and impotence. On the contrary I realised her venerableness, dignity, and strength. Roman Catholic devotions, especially in Latin countries, are to a great extent too extravagant and unrestrained for me, and they have no more of the impressiveness of antiquity than those of the communion to which I now belong, the historic Church of my own dear land. I fully agree with Lord Hugh Cecil that nationalism in religion has produced many evils, the present war perhaps among them, but I do not feel that in this respect we are any worse off than other countries. The spirit of English churchmanship is no more un-Catholic than that of Germany or even Spain. I came back from all my tours fully convinced that Rome could not give us anything which the Church of England did not possess in equal measure with the additional advantage of a liberty and comprehensiveness foreign to the genius of the larger communion. In England the power and significance that come of age and long unbroken continuity are on the side of Anglicanism, not Romanism. The latter is a modern importation and has a distinctly foreign

flavour about it. The Church of Augustine and Colman is the same Church without a break in which I minister to-day. Her historic dioceses are the same, co-terminous with the ancient Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, with a succession of prelates reaching back without interruption to Wilfrid, Chad, and Aidan. Her very buildings in no small degree are the epitome of her story. There stand the ancient fanes erected by the pious hands of our pre-Reformation fathers to the glory of God; therein stood the altars at which they worshipped; without are the churchyards in which they lie. If we are to look for catholicity let us begin at home; we need not wander far afield.

By the middle of 1914 at the furthest all this was clear to me, and it was only a matter of time before I should feel free to act upon it. I felt that, as Bishop Gore says, the Church of England had a special mission in the world, that of witnessing for a liberal Catholicism.<sup>1</sup> My affinities were with that, and I knew it. That, despite all its exaggerations and incoherences, was what the new theology movement had consciously or unconsciously been seeking. There could be no returning to Protestant individualism; in the corporate unity of the Catholic Church, and that alone, was full satisfaction to be found for my religious needs. One had to get

<sup>1</sup> *Orders and Unity*, Introduction iv. *et* pp. 199–205.

into the main stream of Christian history if that were possible.

The great outstanding difficulty was my charge at the City Temple. I never had the slightest doubt in my mind as to the reality of the divine call to me to minister there. Only one thing could release me from that, and that would be an equally clear expression of the will of God that I should go elsewhere. I felt sure such would be forthcoming if I were to make any change, so I waited calmly and with no distress of mind; I felt that I knew what was coming, but I did not feel that I ought to do anything myself to hasten it. On my return from America early in 1912 I had been examined by two medical specialists and found to be suffering from an overstrained heart and nervous system. It was thought best that I should retire from the pulpit for a time or at least limit my activities very drastically. I put myself in the hands of the office-bearers with regard to the matter, and from that day forward took no public engagements outside my own church and was relieved of all detail of administration within it. In July 1914, just before my summer holiday was due, I had a sudden breakdown followed by a sharp illness. Once more the medical verdict was unfavourable, and when I was convalescent I wrote to the office-bearers to say so and to tell them plainly that I thought I had better

resign. This they would not hear of, and offered to get me any assistance in their power for a time and see what that would do. Then the war broke out, and in consequence I came back to my duties before I had fully recovered. I did not find occasional assistance to be of much use. The congregation was drawn from such immense distances that the majority of those composing it could not be induced to make a long journey down to the city to hear preachers whom they did not know. In the early spring following I gave up preaching twice on Sundays, and Dr. Black of New York shortly afterwards came over and acted as my colleague for two months. There was a proposal that this arrangement should be made a permanency, and no man could have desired a more delightful colleague than Dr. Black, but in the end for various reasons he felt obliged to decline.

Six months earlier, about the 4th of January I believe, I had opened my heart to the Bishop of London and told him just how I was situated, and that I thought of returning to communion in the Church of England if ultimately I should be set free to do so. The idea was not new to him. We had discussed it long before in an abstract fashion. He knew my leanings in religious matters, as he always had my confidence. As far back as fourteen years ago he once asked me what I missed most in Noncon-

formity as compared with the Church of England, and I replied "the altar." He never forgot this remark, and recurred to it again and again in conversation in after years. He recalled it once more on the occasion specified, and asked if that had at last become the determining factor in my thought about the momentous question now before me. I told him it was. Little more was done for some time: I simply let matters develop without attempting to influence them; I wanted to follow God's way, not my own. One thing I did myself, of a definite character. For a long time I had had thoughts of re-writing my book, the *New Theology*, keeping to the same sequence of subjects, but correcting all the points in which it was at variance with Catholic truth. The name, however, made this impossible. I had a great dislike to it; it never was my own choice; and to re-write the book without retaining the name would have been to produce a wholly different book. I thought I might do that, but the time was not opportune. I now decided to withdraw the book and purchase the publishing rights to prevent its possible re-issue. This I did in March 1915.

About the same time an approach was made to me from a prominent publishing firm to undertake a work suitable for the general reader giving a not too recondite account of the phases through which modern criticism had passed in

regard to the person of our Lord and His earthly ministry, and making some attempt to sum up results and present a reverent study of the life of lives. I hesitated considerably, chiefly because of the difficulty of the commission. One might have ventured upon a survey of the critical field in regard to the subject; but with so many unsolved problems staring one in the face, upon which as yet New Testament scholarship is far from having said its last word, I did not greatly relish the idea of doing anything further. Criticism was one thing, and the devout presentation of a consistent story of our Lord's sayings and doings in the days of His flesh was another. There had been too many failures in that field to make me very willing to risk adding to them. I agreed that the work needed to be done, and referred the proposal elsewhere. I mentioned one or two others as fitter to undertake the task than I, and I believe the suggestion was put before them and declined. Ultimately it came back to me, and finally in the month of June I consented to do what I could with it if plenty of time were given. By now I had definitely decided to withdraw from my position in Non-conformity. I thought I might go on till after the war and then return to lay communion in the Church of England. Much to the surprise of the adviser of the firm in question, I



observed as I laid down the pen after signing the agreement, that this meant the end of my City Temple ministry. "Why?" he inquired. Because, was my reply, I would not think of undertaking serious literary work such as this would involve unless I were contemplating retirement from the pulpit. I then explained how matters really stood, and that the decision just taken was only part of a much larger question. A few days afterwards, it happened that, without my knowledge, but without any breach of confidence, the matter was referred to in conversation with the Bishop of Birmingham (Dr. Wakefield) as a fact of some interest from the Church standpoint. My name was not mentioned, but the Bishop has since told me that he immediately guessed it, having himself prophesied publicly some years before that this would be the course that I must ultimately take. He had frequently heard me preach, though I was unaware of it, and knew my mind very well. He suggested to his friend that if I had no objection to disclosing my identity he would be glad to invite me to come and stay with him and discuss the situation. I gave the required permission, and the invitation reached me just as I was starting for my summer holiday, the former part of which I intended to spend with the troops in France. I

travelled down to Birmingham and saw the Bishop. He went straight to the point in his usual business-like way, and in a very few minutes had outlined the arrangements which have since been carried out. He inquired about the *New Theology*, and I told him that the book had been withdrawn months before. He expressed satisfaction at this, and I told him in brief what is set down in these pages of the doctrinal and ecclesiastical position to which I had come and why. I asked to be allowed to think over his generous tentative suggestions during my absence in France. I revealed to him frankly my difficulty about the City Temple, especially in view of the war and the new needs to which the war had given rise, and he was large-hearted enough to understand it fully.

Early in the following September after my return from France we met in London by appointment. My mind was made up. I felt that I could not consistently remain where I was, and that the logic of events had freed me from any moral obligation to do so. The failure of my health, and the impossibility of making satisfactory permanent arrangements for lightening my work at the City Temple, had made that clear. I intimated to the Bishop that I should be glad of a long rest and was in much need of it after an exacting ministry of twenty

years' duration, and that probably the transition from Nonconformity to the Church of England could be more easily made after a period of lay communion. He agreed to this in the abstract, but demurred to it in this instance on two grounds: first, that if there were any doubt of my vocation I might need time to go into the wilderness and consider my future course. But there was none; God had manifestly made me a preacher, and it was my duty to preach. Secondly, the present was an unexampled time of national need, a time of universal suffering and strain, and every man who could do anything to comfort and help his fellows was called upon to do it. I thought these considerations wise and good; I think so still.<sup>1</sup> I sent my resignation to the office-bearers immediately. A meeting of the church members was held shortly afterwards at which my decision was communicated together with the announcement of my intention to seek orders in the Church of England. Very beautifully and tenderly was the news received by my beloved people. On October 10 I preached my

<sup>1</sup> Since the above paragraph was written I have received a letter from the Bishop in which he says: "I should be glad if you would state somewhere in your book that personal affection for yourself was a leading factor in my taking your case up so strongly. We had not often met, but I was drawn to you, and our Christian social sympathies were very real also."

last sermon in the City Temple, and walked out of the pulpit feeling like a man in a dream. The crisis was over; I was beginning life anew in my forty-ninth year at the very point where I had left off in Oxford nearly a generation earlier.

## CHAPTER XI

### REORDINATION

IT should be clearly understood by those who read these words that nothing in the nature of a bargain was entered into on either side in the short and simple negotiations which took place before I entered the Church of England. This statement may be deemed unnecessary, but from hints which have reached me from various quarters I think it should be made. There were no quasi-simoniactal transactions. No prospects of advancement were held out to me, nor did I ask for any. I took up my new ministry on the same terms as any newly ordained clergyman. The Bishop of Birmingham did, indeed, suggest at our first interview, subject to the consent of Bishop Hamilton Baynes, that I should be attached to the cathedral pulpit and excused from parochial work, but this was, as he said, that my special gifts might be most usefully employed. My own previously expressed wish had been to work with my old and dear friend Canon Adderley, which I should have been very happy to do. But the Bishop's idea was the

best and wisest. Bishop Hamilton Baynes, the cathedral rector, readily fell in with it, and I have every reason to rejoice that he did so. He has been most kind and considerate all through, and one could not be more fortunately placed than to be associated with him and the other members of the cathedral staff.

But this is anticipating, and I must keep to the strict sequence of events. If there be any who think I ought not to have considered the City Temple at all, or contemplated remaining there for a moment after arriving at the spiritual position above recorded, I can but say firmly that I differ from them. A trust like that is not to be lightly relinquished. The City Temple is a preaching station with a vast personal congregation, a congregation coming to be taught by one particular man. I had absolute freedom in the pulpit; I could preach what I thought fit and had none to say me nay. As a matter of fact, my Catholic tendencies were quite well known to those who habitually attended upon my ministry. If my health had stood the strain I do not see how I legitimately could, in all reason and conscience, have flung over the heavy responsibility this involved, nor would I have done so. If there are those who condemn this avowal I am sorry, but I believe I was right. It was not a question of choosing between heathenism and Christianity. The people to whom I minis-



tered Sunday by Sunday were good Christians, a very large proportion of them Anglicans, and more and more I could have used the central position thus given to me in the direction of encouraging the movement towards reunion which has begun to make itself felt in recent years. That alone would have justified me in remaining where I was, and I took it very seriously into consideration. That I did not remain was not my own doing; it was God's will unmistakably revealed through force of circumstances.

On October 14, 1915, I fulfilled a long-standing engagement to preach for Dr. Jones at Bournemouth. This was my last sermon as a Nonconformist minister. The next day I motored over to Oxford to stay with Bishop Gore, and the following morning, in his private chapel, was received once more as a communicant of the Anglican Church. This bare recital of the facts gives but a poor idea of the deep feeling and reverent thankfulness with which I knelt at the altar to receive the holy sacrament from the hands of one to whom I owed so much and who was associated with so many things dear and memorable to me in the past. I will say no more.

Within a few days after leaving Oxford, I went straight to France for two months' work with the army in the field. I did this partly because I wanted to take my small share with our brave soldiers in what they were going through and

partly in order to escape interviewers. Pressmen were very persistent in England, as was to be expected, over the question of reordination, and I was determined to avoid all occasion of strife. I thought it best to say nothing, even at the cost of being misunderstood and misrepresented. The following document, however, which was never published, may be of some interest in this connection. The editors of several Church newspapers had very courteously placed their columns at my disposal if I wished to make a statement to Anglicans at large. I told them I did not wish to make any statement. One of them, in conversation with the Bishop of Birmingham a little later, understood him to say that a short statement of some sort was desirable, and in deference to this opinion I drew one up and took it with me to Oxford and submitted it to Dr. Gore for criticism. He approved it just as it stood, but agreed with me that its publication at the moment might be provocative of controversy, and that it would be best to adhere to my policy of silence. I afterwards found that, on the whole, the Bishop of Birmingham agreed with this view, so I did not issue the statement. It can fitly be inserted here as summing up what I thought and felt in the hour of taking leave of Nonconformity.

The editor of — — has been good enough to invite me to make a brief statement in his

columns concerning my present position and intentions in view of the various unauthorised paragraphs on the subject which have appeared in the press of late. I accede to this suggestion in the hope that it may render future and fuller explanations unnecessary, and I earnestly ask to be spared discussion and comment. In this hour of national trial and danger it is surely desirable to allow personal matters to sink out of sight; even the most important of them are trivial indeed in contrast with the mighty issues at stake on the battlefields of Europe.

I am returning to communion in the Church of England after a long interval spent in the Nonconformist ministry. This is no sudden resolve, but a decision arrived at after protracted and earnest consideration. In taking this step I do not feel that I am exchanging a false religion for a true, but a less perfect for a more perfect system of belief and worship. I know Nonconformists too well, and respect them too much, ever to speak slightingly of the spiritual witness they have borne for so many generations in the English-speaking world, and I long for the day when they shall be reunited with the mother Church in corporate fellowship. Perhaps that day is not so far distant as at present appears, and it shall be my constant endeavour in the future, as it has been in the past, to promote as far as I can the growth of that better understanding between the Established Church and evangelical Nonconformist bodies which, thank God, is already and increasingly manifest. I

expect to continue to maintain friendly relations with the fellow-Christians with whom I have been associated for so many years. This is specially the case with the congregation of the City Temple. It is with a sad heart that I have parted from a people so loyal and generous and from whom as their minister I have never received anything but kindness and affection. I freely confess that had I been physically equal to the continued strain of my work at the City Temple my task to-day would have been much harder than it is. I have not taken much part in the general affairs of organised Nonconformity; my ties with it are few and slight, but those with the City Temple are many and strong. Conviction and vocation are not necessarily quite the same thing, and I am as sure to-day as I ever was that it has been my vocation to preach in the City Temple pulpit; it is otherwise now. Perhaps on this point I may be permitted to quote an extract from a statement already made by me to the City Temple Church members—

“ You observe, no doubt, that I have said nothing in the letter to the church secretary as to my reasons for feeling that the Church of England is my spiritual home. Most of my friends know all about them already, and I earnestly desire to avoid giving any occasion for public controversy. No statement that one could make on this point would be free from that danger, and I therefore ask to be allowed to remain silent. In this time of national suffering it surely behoves all Christians to cultivate sympathy and brotherly kindness, to draw near to one another, not to hold apart. Let me emphasise this, however. As long as

I was able to do the work necessarily required of the minister of this great church I have felt morally bound to remain at my post; I did not feel free to choose any other. But as by the manifest will of God I am no longer equal to the work thus involved, I feel that that vocation is at an end and another sounds in my ears; I am free to go where my heart leads. After the City Temple no other Nonconformist pulpit has any attraction for me; no other church is possible to me as a future sphere of labour than that to which I go.

“I beg to be allowed to go quietly. I need and long for a period of retirement and bodily and mental rest, and this I hope to secure after my return from France.”

It is requisite, nevertheless, that a word should be said here in regard to my attitude to the Church I am re-entering. I have always loved the Church of England—her historic continuity, dignity, comprehensiveness, worship and discipline. Within her borders I received the greatest spiritual impulse of my life a generation ago, the effect of which has never passed away. She stands unrivalled in Christendom for her combination of intellectual freedom with Catholic tradition; she has all the advantages and few of the disadvantages of a more rigid ecclesiastical authority. Sectarianism is deplorable; it cannot be in accordance with the mind of our Lord. No new Church was created at the Reformation settlement; the Church of to-day is the Church of Augustine and Augustine's predecessors in this island home of ours; and the first step towards a reunited Christendom, so far as our own country is concerned, is the gathering into the one ancient fold of all the diverse elements, so many of them rich and admirable, which to-



gether constitute the religious life of England at the present time. To this long-prayed-for end large concessions are well worth the making from every side.

To me personally, I have to admit, more is at stake than even this. The whole system of the Church hangs together—doctrine, practice, institutions—despite all her illogicalities and imperfections. The Incarnation, the Atonement, the extension of both in the sacraments, the ministry which guards them, and the visible society itself as the sphere of sacramental grace—all these seem to me to imply each other. I have often testified in years gone by that if my mind ever moved towards a more conservative position in reference to traditional Christianity it could not be content with the Nonconformist standpoint. That is exactly what has taken place. I cannot rest in religious individualism, and everything short of full communion with the Church of all the Christian centuries is religious individualism. It would still be true to describe me as a religious liberal, but I am a liberal with a Catholic outlook, and my liberalism has had to be greatly modified within the past few years. Immanentism is inadequate as an explanation of the Christian facts, and pressed too far is erroneous. The controversy which broke out concerning my views nine years ago called forth from me a hasty and premature reply in a book called *The New Theology*. In so far as the views therein expressed were in conflict with generally accepted Christian doctrine I



have withdrawn them, and I do not think any moderate churchman would be disposed to find fault from the doctrinal standpoint with my pulpit utterances for the last five or six years.

This is all I care to say at present, except to beg the sympathy, forbearance, and Christian charity of all with whom I have to do.

My work among the soldiers, especially the wounded and dying, during my stay in France, drove every merely personal consideration out of my head. I could think of nothing but the pain and death around me, and the awful pit of hell into which our boasted civilisation had been hurled. I learned some things likewise about the weaknesses and failures of our national religion which are better discussed elsewhere than in these pages, and it was impossible to be thrown day after day into the company of chaplains and Christian workers of all denominations without feeling that our common Christianity is indeed a real and most blessed fact for which to be profoundly thankful. In presence of such a cataclysm as the war, how comparatively trivial our disagreements appear! I came back from that experience more than ever convinced that the question of the reunion of Christendom is one of urgency, not mere expediency, and that its indefinite postponement is inflicting grievous harm upon human society. Who can say how much of the international antagonisms

and secularity of aim from which we are all suffering must be attributed to the divided state of Christendom?

I spent Christmas in Birmingham, whither my home had been removed in my absence. A few weeks of retreat and necessary rest followed—far less than I could have desired—and I was ordained deacon on St. Matthias' Day, February 24th. Priest's orders I received on the Trinity Sunday following. The preacher on the former of these two occasions was Canon Adderley—the delicate kindness of this choice on the part of the Bishop I was not slow to perceive. Towards the close of the sermon the preacher addressed himself directly to me in the following terms—

Dear brother, whom it has been my privilege to know and love for many years, you have an advantage over many of us in that God the Holy Spirit has so clearly shown you that He is with you and is calling you, long before you were called upon to answer the question in the Ordination Service. To deny the work of the Holy Spirit in your former ministry would, for me, at least, be to risk the commission of the unpardonable sin. Nevertheless, the step you are taking to-day is a very real step onward in loyal membership of the Church in which you were christened and confirmed. It is in no spirit of flattery (nothing would be more out of place at such a

time) that I say that we welcome you to fellowship in the Anglican ministry. You join us at a time which I have already described as critical; a time which is critical not, thank God, in the direction of alarm so much as in that of hope. Old controversies between Christians are ceasing to savour of reality, different denominations are able to learn from one another in a way that was impossible not so many years ago; the three great divisions of Christendom are allied together in a common warfare; here at home the descendants of those who were most bitterly opposed to each other are longing to walk in the House of God as friends; old battle-cries in the religious world no longer move devout, converted Christians to quarrel, but rather the very spears have become pruning-hooks with which we try to cultivate all kinds of flowers that may grow together in one garden of the Lord. We are learning lessons of how to worship, how to pray, how to meditate and to keep silence, what conversion is, what grace is. The common love of Jesus is making us one in united effort heavenwards. Outside the immediate circle of the Church the old quarrel between religion and science has almost ceased, while the philosophers are from every quarter making suggestions which are enriching Christian thought.

May God the Holy Spirit confirm in you those graces which will most help us at this time to the glory of God. Together may we be witnesses of the Resurrection of the Lord, showing men by our lives that the Christ still lives: the

wisdom of God guiding men as individuals, as churches, and as nations; the Saviour bringing pardon and peace to weary souls and weary fighters in a noble cause; the King of kings and Lord of lords sitting above the waterflood: the Son of Man going about doing good; the Lamb of God adored in heaven by saints and angels, and by His children on earth in every Eucharist; the Good Shepherd feeding His sheep at every altar. Together may we once more open the eyes of English men and women to see the other world, the only great reality in the midst of the shams and hypocrisies of modern life. Together may we do our little bit to make the kingdoms of this world into the Kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ.

These significant and generous words have not attracted from Nonconformists the amount of attention that might have been expected. I am not aware that they have been quoted to any large extent in the Nonconformist religious press, though in this I speak subject to correction. On the other hand, they were reproduced in the *Church Times* and several other Anglican publications. The definite and outspoken recognition which they give to the fact that the divine blessing does attend Nonconformist ministrations is a notable admission, especially when it is remembered that the speaker himself has always been a strong and pronounced Anglo-Catholic. No one in Anglican circles, so far as I know, has since

taken any objection to them. To couple the thought of denying the reality of my earlier ministry with that of committing the sin against the Holy Ghost is indeed an emphatic repudiation of all desire to belittle the spiritual worth of Nonconformity and its witness in the world—and this, be it observed, in the very act of the reordination of an ex-Nonconformist minister.

The question of my reordination gave me no qualms. No more than Canon Adderley did I think of it as a confession of the invalidity of my past ministry. I believed myself to be no more and no less truly a minister of Jesus Christ after I had been ordained in the Church of England than I was before. So much may be admitted without any jeopardising of principle. My action in submitting to reordination was no slight upon Nonconformity in general nor my own twenty years' previous ministry in particular. When would-be controversialists maintained the opposite and wrote to me to say that in being reordained I was practically admitting that I had never before been entitled to call myself a Christian minister, I could have replied that I admitted nothing of the sort. My reordination was no judgment upon my earlier ministry one way or the other. That ministry was what it was, had its own value, and nothing that any ecclesiastical authority could say or do could make it different.



To put the matter on the lowest ground, I was now receiving authority to minister in the Church of England, and that authority was conveyed by the laying on of hands. Would it have been reasonable to refuse to accept it on the ground that I believed I had already been validly ordained? The answer might have taken this form : Yes, you may have been, so far as the denomination to which you belonged is concerned; but in the Church to which you now belong the right to minister is conferred by the imposition of the hands of a bishop; you must choose whether you will submit to this rite or go without the orders; you cannot expect to upset the whole system of the Church by having an exception made in your case; we do not question the validity of your previous orders for the kind of ministry you then exercised—do not take the matter into consideration at all—but you must not think of trying to force that method and that view of the ministry upon us of another communion.

Of course, no such argument could ever have been used, and no one would have dreamed of it. The real point was that in the opinion of some Nonconformists I ought to have remained a Nonconformist rather than allow myself to go through the ceremony of reordination necessary for becoming a clergyman of the Church of England. And, as I hope I have shown above with sufficient



cleanness, that was not an alternative which I should have cared to contemplate: too much would have been sacrificed. Or, to put the matter more accurately, most of these good people would have been willing that I should become a layman and never preach again at all rather than be reordained. The more extreme among them, I have some ground for believing, would have viewed this prospect with equanimity, for it is a curious thing that the only angry protests I have received from Nonconformists against my reordination, or almost the only ones, have come from persons who did their utmost in days gone by to drive me out of the Nonconformist ministry altogether. That they should have anything to say on the subject of my reordination is somewhat remarkable in the circumstances. The inference is irresistible that they would have had no objection to my voice being silenced but a very great objection to its being heard in an Anglican pulpit. Truly it might be said of them as of certain over-zealous apostles of old, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of."

But let it not be supposed that this grudging attitude was the one taken by Nonconformists in general. It was not. And on the whole I think it may fairly be said that the feeling of my former co-religionists towards me at this time was one of charity and good-will, as was well exemplified by Dr. Clifford at my valedictory

meeting in the City Temple. They felt that the question of reordination was crucial for them, but did not dispute my right to do what I felt conscientiously bound to do, and indubitably they had no wish to see me prevented from continuing to be a preacher, even though under other and widely different auspices.

The above is, I repeat, the lowest ground on which the subject could be argued, but I hold that it would be sufficient of itself to justify my action. The issue from this point of view is narrowed down to the one vital question as to whether I were called to take Holy Orders in the Church of England or not. Lay communion would have disposed of the difficulty from the Nonconformist side. But if lay communion were not enough; if I were to continue to be a preacher, let alone serve the altar, I must receive episcopal ordination. On the one simple ground as to what was practical and desirable there could only be one decision possible.

But I am far from wishing to suggest that this is all that was involved—that is, to me personally. To Nonconformists it should be enough. To my own thinking there was more at stake, much more. Everything turned on the question of the constitution of the Church of Christ. What was the Church? Where was it? Wherein consisted its principal title to witness and mediate Jesus Christ to the sinful, sorrowing world? Did

our Lord found a Church or not? If so, did He leave any directions for its proper administration? Was its continuity in space and time of importance or to be left out of account? I thought I knew the answer to these questions sufficiently well to make it imperative that I should seek to place myself more fully in line with Christian history. I did not deny, I do not deny, that a true and real Christian life can be lived, and is being lived, outside the main current of Catholic tradition, but it has become clear to me that it is only within that current that a full, all-round Christian development can be realised, especially in its social aspects. There is loss and impoverishment in remaining apart, a loss and impoverishment which extends in some degree to the parent stock likewise. That our Lord did mean to found a visible society is, I think, obvious to an impartial reader of His recorded words, and from the sense in which they were always understood and acted upon by His followers in the apostolic and sub-apostolic age. One need appeal only to the fact that the New Testament consistently bears witness both to the visibility and the unity of the Church, and lays much stress upon the indispensableness of communion with the Church for all who would join themselves to Christ. The Church was the body of which He was the head, and all individual Christians were members thereof.

This was insisted upon all the way through. The Church was no amorphous aggregate of individual souls, each with its own special and direct relationship to the living head but standing in no necessary relationship to the rest; it was a growing organism, a society which He indwelt and whose divine life was shared by all who became part of it. When the Christian religion first emerges into history, this New Testament view of the meaning of the Church is seen to be the universally accepted one. There is no question of two or more churches or of local churches independent of the main body of Christians. There is but one Church, and to be a Christian at all is to belong to that one Church. No one thinks of the invisible Church—that is, the totality of believers—as having a greater significance than the visible. The very fundamental idea of Christian faith and worship forbade such an assumption. Other religions were local and national in their organisation, the Christian ecclesia claimed to be universal, one and the same society everywhere. Admission to it was perfectly definite and easily recognisable; the gateway was baptism, and it was held that the ceremony of Christian baptism constituted the person submitting to it an integral part of the universal Christian society, the Catholic Church.

How this can fairly be disputed I cannot see. I am concerned only with facts, not with theories,

and I judge it to be a self-evident fact that the Church in New Testament times and throughout all its early history, so far as that history is accessible, was reckoned to be indivisibly one in all senses. No local church was, strictly speaking, a church at all; it was the local representative of the universal Church. The Church in Jerusalem was the same as the Church in Rome, Alexandria, Ephesus, and Antioch. Heresies and schisms there might be in plenty, but they were viewed with apprehension and abhorrence, and even schismatics, to obtain a hearing, had to claim to be in the true apostolic succession. As far back as Tertullian's day their inability to prove such a claim was held to be conclusive against their doctrinal positions.<sup>1</sup> It would be impossible to exaggerate the firmness with which the outward unity of the Christian fabric was maintained in primitive times. Hardly anyone, I should think, would say otherwise. The modern world has unfortunately become habituated to the thought of a divided Christendom, but anything more unlike primitive Christian thought and practice cannot well be imagined. And the Church of the early Christian centuries had the best of reasons for its assumption that formal unity was of the essence of its well-being. The Christian society was not as other societies; it was not a mere human institution, a club, a

<sup>1</sup> De Praescr., 3 *et* 32.



guild, a voluntary association of believers in a common cause, or even a nation—though it was sometimes described as a holy nation. It was a mystical entity, an earthly sodality with a super-earthly source and sanction, an order permeated and sustained by a supernatural life. If this fact of facts has been largely lost sight of in the religion with which the ordinary Englishman is most familiar to-day, where does the blame rest? Is it not traceable to the countenance we have so long extended to the notion that any set of people can make their own Church at will, that the gospel and not the Church is the first thing to be considered in the organisation of religious life?—as if the gospel could ever be rightly dissociated from its setting and background in the unbroken continuity of the witness of the Church to the presence of its Divine Founder in the midst of His own. I am conscious as I write these words of the difficulty of making them understood by a certain type of Protestant mind. Can nothing be done to rescue the Christianity of the present-day English-speaking world from the calamitous error that it is only a set of views to be promulgated—and a more or less incoherent and unstable set of views at that—and not a life to be lived in corporate and immediate fellowship with another and higher world than that of our everyday perceptions? This is practically the whole issue between sacramental and non-



sacramental religion as it confronts us just now.

To the question, Why does succession matter either in the society itself or its ministers? I would answer, because all life is fundamentally one. Nothing is unimportant that helps to demonstrate that oneness. You cannot legitimately sever the present from the past or the substance from the form. You cannot cut off one part from another and dub it secular or sacred, material or spiritual, at your discretion. Outward and inward, lower and higher, they are one: the lesser the expression of the greater. It all means, means intensely, as Robert Louis Stevenson would say; means all together and in its wholeness. It is no bodiless good that we propagate. I have a spiritual life to live, but I have to live it under physical conditions and within limitations and activities which often seem to bear no relation to its essential quality. But I know that nothing is unrelated to the ultimate realities of my being and destiny; it all means, means intensely; humanity is a solidarity—so is creation, for that matter. And to bid me try to distinguish between my life in the world and my life in God so as to be always guarding the latter from contamination with the former, is to be in danger of falling into an ancient heresy and divide me into two persons. No, what I want is to have

the whole of life purified and sanctified, to have the supernatural absorb and transform the natural, to relate Christ to it in every part and particle and make it utterly and completely His. Progress in matters ecclesiastical is not by fission. If the Church is ever to overcome the world and transform it into the kingdom of God, it will not be by splitting up into cults; it can only be by realising and giving full expression to the conviction that mankind is one because God is one, and the Church is one because Christ is one.

Did our Master and Lord leave behind Him unequivocal guidance, which no future generation could misunderstand, as to the way in which His Church was to be ruled and organised? No; He promised that the Holy Spirit should supply all such guidance as it might be needed, and that promise has been wondrously fulfilled. Not till the moral abuses of the Roman hierarchy goaded the conscience of Europe into a revolt that shattered the outward unity of the Church was the obligation to maintain that unity ever seriously questioned. Now we have got to get it back; civilisation is perishing for lack of it. Protestantism is losing ground, and Catholicism languishes. Could anyone reasonably contend that our Saviour's valedictory prayer in the upper room at Jerusalem would find an adequate answer in the perpetuation of such a state of things as exists to-day wherever His gospel is preached

and His name held in honour? It were impious to think so. He did take pains to ensure both unity and continuity as far as these could be ensured by any specific and definite act in addition to His own plain words, and that was by appointing a ministry whose authority was never afterwards deputed but by the laying on of hands so far as any record of apostolic practice survives. No better method could have been devised of conserving the identity of the new Israel than by thus giving it into the charge of pastors appointed by the Lord Himself. There is no clear indication in the New Testament or in primitive Christian observance that any other method of perpetuating the ministry was thought of than appointment by authority, the authority of those who already held the office. A chain of consecrating hands extends all the way through the centuries from the hour when the risen Lord originally said to an awe-stricken group of Galileans, "As my Father hath sent Me, even so send I you."<sup>1</sup> The choice of local disciples may have fallen upon this or that member of their community to preside over them in spiritual things, but so far as we have any information on the subject at all, or are able to infer what

<sup>1</sup> This remark may be challenged by some who deny that the apostolic succession of the ministry has been maintained. To this I would reply that, if it had been broken fifty times over, one validly consecrated bishop would have been enough to restore it in its fulness.

happened, it goes to show that every such choice had to be ratified by the laying on of hands of the apostles or the presbytery, whatever that may mean. I am not taking anything for granted in saying so; I but assert that, whoever or whatever the presbyters were, there is ample justification for the view that they never attempted to exercise authority in the Church without being invested with the power to do so by the apostles or someone acting in their stead or deriving his ministry mediately or immediately from theirs. The laying on of hands could have been no empty form; it must have meant something, and, even as the outward and visible sign of the conveyance of authority, pointed to the original bestowal of the trust by the hands of Christ Himself and passed on from man to man and generation to generation. The prophet may have needed no such outward attestation of his right to instruct the flock of Christ; his word was its own evidence; but if there be one fact which may reasonably be regarded as beyond dispute it is that the ordinary minister, by whatever name he be called, was instituted by this method. His commission came from Christ through the apostolic college or men appointed thereby in due succession.

It will be observed that up to this point I have said not a word about the episcopate or attempted to settle the question of the threefold order of

the ministry *per saltum*, as it were. I have been content to show why, in my judgment, continuity both in space and time must be held of the very first importance to the life of the Church. I could say much more on the point, but I forbear: what is salient to the issue can be put into a very few words, and I have tried to do it, with what success I leave it to the reader to decide for himself. I have given reason why likewise this desired continuity could best be secured by the apostolic succession of the ministry, but I have not said anything about grades or distinctions in the ministry. That is an enormous field of inquiry into which for our present purpose I feel it unnecessary to enter. But will anyone incline to quarrel with the further statement that, if the responsibility of securing the succession of the ministry had been left with the whole body of duly ordained ministers, after the Church began to grow and develop to such an extent that its missionaries had penetrated to every quarter of the Roman world, there would soon have been confusion and disorder? It was inevitable that there should have been some well-understood restriction of the power of conferring Holy Orders. And is it not significant that, so soon as the Church becomes a force in history, the episcopate, as distinguished from the presbyterate, is seen to be fully and universally established? I do not

contend for any more. There is the fact, a fact not to be explained away, that for the long period during which the Church preserved its outward unity unbroken, the practically universal mode of government was that which in its essential features still obtains in the greater part of Christendom. The new beginning in the sixteenth century overthrew it, so far as the newly formed Protestant communities were concerned, but the question is at least worth asking whether these communities would have dispensed with bishops if they could have got bishops—that is, accredited representatives of the episcopal order. In most cases it was Hobson's choice. Archbishop Hermann of Cologne is an isolated figure in his day. And, whether or no, does that violent break justify us in going behind the theory and practice of a thousand years? If we are ever to get together again it cannot be upon the model of Geneva. This is why I have had no misgivings and no hesitation in getting into line with historic Christianity by receiving my commission anew from the hands of a bishop of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church.



## CHAPTER XII

### TOWARDS REUNION

THAT all devout minds are hungering for the healing of the sad divisions of Christendom has long been apparent to any observer of the signs of the times. Tentative efforts towards this much-to-be-desired end have been repeatedly made since the Lambeth proposals of 1888—the first serious approach of the kind from the side of episcopacy to the Nonconformists since the days of Archbishop Tillotson. We are all watching with sympathetic interest the parallel movement which is going on between the two great Presbyterian churches north of the Tweed, and it may reasonably be expected that if that movement succeeds it will have a considerable and most beneficial influence on the relations of the established and non-established religious communions in England. It may show us the way to solve the problem of combining solemn and definite State recognition of religion with complete spiritual autonomy for the Church. Similar movements have long been in progress in our overseas dominions from which the mother

country might very well learn. Then, as afore-said, we have the promising negotiations initiated by Mr. Shakespeare for welding the various Non-conformist bodies into a United Free Church of England. Lastly, there has been the significant and highly important appeal of the American Protestant denominations for a unity which shall not only embrace American Christianity as a whole, but that of the Old World likewise. It is a bold programme, but is being vigorously promoted, and but for the war might by now have been well on the way towards realisation. Rome of course stands aloof; no other could be contemplated at the present stage; but the idea of bringing the scattered Protestant—or, to be exact, non-Roman—Christian communities of the world into closer co-operation and ultimate fusion has already borne valuable fruit. The deputation which visited this country some years ago has so far succeeded in its purpose that it has brought into existence a joint committee of Churchmen and Nonconformists which is still sitting, and has lately produced a remarkable declaration of agreement in regard to matters of faith, though it has not yet been able to achieve a similar understanding in regard to order. But could anyone have prophesied a generation or even a decade ago that so much as this was within the bounds of possibility? It augurs well for the future. We may take it

as certain that doctrine will not be the insuperable barrier to reunion when the time comes, as come it will, to discuss the subject on a larger scale and in all its bearings. If there be an insuperable barrier, which God forbid, it will be the vexed question of orders. Can we see a way through this difficulty as well as the other? I think so if we are in earnest to find it.

It is useless to minimise the seriousness of the issue thus involved, or to try to persuade either party to regard it as non-essential. The only solution of the problem that would be entertained must be one that will allow full scope and deference to what each feels to be a vital principle. The question to be discussed is whether a *modus vivendi* can be arrived at which would give us all the advantages of combination without sacrificing anything which Nonconformist or Episcopalian believes to be indispensable to his Christianity. That is the sole point, and I for one am not without hope that it can be got over, and that without unreality or pretence or leaving outstanding differences untouched.

Are Nonconformist churches true churches? Judged by the tests of catholicity and apostolicity, they might be found wanting. But there is one supreme test by which they would not be found wanting: *Ubi Christus ibi ecclesia*. No extremest sacerdotalist would deny that Nonconformists as individuals already belong to the

Church of God, whatever may be said of their associations for worship. Roman Catholics admit that as baptised Christians they belong to the soul of the Church, though not to its body. Personally I would affirm that there must be a true sense in which every body of believers wherein spiritual life is to be found is a church. Does a branch on which foliage and fruit appear cease to be part of a tree merely because it grows on the other side of a garden wall away from the parent trunk? No gardener would say so, though he might deplore the fact that the wall was there and that the growth of the branch had been so irregular as to weaken the tree itself and spoil its symmetry. Let us proceed upon that basis and we shall get on; otherwise we shall fail in any overtures for a resumption of corporate fellowship.

Again, would anyone dare to deny the presence of the Holy Ghost in the work of the Nonconformist ministry? It is this token of God's blessing upon the labours of men not episcopally ordained that I had specially in mind in saying in the previous chapter that I regard myself as no more and no less truly a minister of Christ to-day than I was when I preached in the City Temple. I have received a new authority, authority to serve the altar, but in the prophetic sense my earlier ministry was as valid as the one I am exercising now :

in fact it is the same. God is not confined to any channel of grace. In all ages He has chosen His own instruments to declare His word and inspired them for the purpose : the prophet cannot be restrained from speaking any more than he can be endowed to speak his message of life and power by any ecclesiastical authority whatsoever. It is a direct gift of God and needs no other sign of its authenticity than the sign of the prophet Jonah, its effect in the hearts of men.

But this consideration gives rise to a very important further point. Nonconformists have never claimed any other kind of orders for their ministers than this. It is the charismatic gift, and that alone, that they value in the exercise of a ministry, the utterance of the prophetic word. This is all they have historically insisted upon in this connection, the validity of the ministry of the word. Where, as I think, they make a mistake is in regarding this as the only kind of valid ministry and refusing to recognise any other. But let that pass for the moment : what I am emphasising is the indisputable fact that the only validity that has ever been asserted of Nonconformist orders, or which Churchmen are asked to recognise, is the validity of the charismatic gift, a validity which no Churchman who knows anything of Nonconformist history can do other than reverently concede unless, as Canon

Adderley says, he is willing to incur the risk of committing the sin against the Holy Ghost.<sup>1</sup>

Turn now to the other side of the question. Have Nonconformists been equally clear upon the subject of sacramental grace? It almost goes without saying that they have not. Calvin's teaching, like that of most of the great Protestant reformers, concerning Christ's covenanted presence in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper was very strong, almost as strong as any sacramentalist could desire; but it is a matter of history that this view has not been maintained by the non-episcopal Christian communities which have succeeded to his inheritance and have their representatives in this and other countries at the present day. Why is this? Do I say too much in suggesting with Father Kelly that it may be, probably is, because of the break with the past effected by their repudiation of the historic episcopate? The inference is to my mind irresistible. "In effect," says this able and devoted Anglican writer, who has great respect for Nonconformists and desire to learn from them; "even where men have for a time

<sup>1</sup> This statement perhaps needs qualifying. There are Nonconformist ministers who would strongly affirm that their orders are in all respects what Anglican orders are, and for the same purposes. I cannot argue the point here, but I think what is said above may be taken on the whole as a fair description of the general Nonconformist view of the subject.



separated the two, the belief in a real sacramental Presence and gift and the belief in a sacramental Episcopacy have by an inexorable human logic always gone together. Wherever the Episcopal ministry has been rejected, the sacramental belief has failed. Wherever belief in a sacramental gift has been weakened, Episcopacy has been defended as a convenience or compromised as a question of minor importance.”<sup>1</sup>

“Precisely !” some stern and unbending evangelical Nonconformist might argue ; “we do reject both for the very good reason that we believe both to savour of superstition and to be an unwarranted and harmful accretion to primitive Christian faith and practice. Belief in an objective divine presence on the altar in the consecrated elements is to us impossible, and we maintain that the mode by which that presence is said by sacerdotalists to be guaranteed, namely by the utterance of a certain fixed form of words and the performance of certain manual acts, is pure magic and therefore degrades a sacred ordinance into something utterly different from what it was originally intended to be.” It is no part of my purpose in the present connection to argue against this view, so strongly and con-

<sup>1</sup> *The Church and Religious Unity*, p. 147. With much of the rest of Father Kelly’s interesting book I do not find myself in complete agreement. It betrays an inadequate understanding of the gravamen of the Nonconformist indictment of prelacy and of State establishments of religion.

scientifically held by millions of my fellow-Christians. I know—we all know—most that can be said for and against it, and it can only be a wearisome iteration of words to go over all that ground again, besides being stale, flat, and unprofitable. Do not let us re-fight our ancient battles: we are out to make peace; and we cannot make peace until we learn to understand each other and to be willing to extend charitable allowance to its utmost limits. And it is not charitable to call that magic which is of the very essence of the Christian life of millions of God's people, not in the Anglican communion only, but in the great Catholic communions of East and West and their associations throughout the world. There are more Christians who attach reverent significance to this supposed magic than there are of those who will have nothing to do with it. It has nourished the spiritual life of untold numbers of the sweetest and most heroic saints that the Christian centuries have produced. Would it not be well, therefore, to pause and ask whether there may be more in this magic than Protestants generally have been willing to concede? Magic is not an admissible name for it. That cannot be magic which has a moral meaning as the sacrament of the altar undoubtedly has. It is a covenanted spiritual act, no wonder-working incantation, no "abracadabra" mumbled by a wizard

as a spell to summon, like Glendower in *Henry IV*, "spirits from the vasty deep." It is no more any of these things or their like than a child's kiss on a mother's lips belongs to the same category: is the love between two hearts any less real for being dependent in a measure for its expression upon a simple yet conventional physical medium? And, let me once more remind Protestant readers, it is dangerous to discriminate too sharply between what is physical and what is spiritual, between outward and inward. The efficacy of the covenanted act depends upon what the Church has always understood by it, and not upon this or that specific ritual deed or word. Once again I would appeal to facts, and it is a fact beyond dispute that the results in life and character of a belief in the Real Presence in the Blessed Sacrament have been and are so abundantly good and beautiful as to constitute in themselves a demonstration of its truth and a justification of Catholic observance in regard to it.

Moreover, let it not be forgotten that Non-conformists themselves share this belief to a certain extent. It might be observed that they share it in a way which fails to make it distinctive enough or to emphasise its value for Christian experience, but they do share it. They believe in the Lord's Supper as a means of grace as well as a memorial service, though

they stress the latter. Most if not all of them would admit that in the practice of primitive Christianity "the Lord's own service" was central to the Church's life. Would it be a very long step for them to acknowledge that something would be gained by restoring it to that central position once more? Theories apart, can we not agree that our Lord's promise to be with His own even unto the end of the age receives special fulfilment when we gather around His holy table to partake in common of the sacramental meal? I do not think that Hooker's words written three centuries and a half ago have yet lost their force and appositeness in reference to the mystery of the Holy Communion. "But seeing that by opening the several opinions which have been held, they are grown for aught I can see on all sides at the length to a general agreement concerning that which alone is material, namely the real participation of Christ and of life in His body and blood by means of this sacrament; wherefore should the world continue still distracted and rent with so manifold contentions, when there remaineth now no controversy saving only about the subject where Christ is? Yea even in this point no side denieth but that the soul of man is the receptacle of Christ's presence. Whereby the question is yet driven to a narrower issue, nor doth any thing rest doubtful but this,

whether when the sacrament is administered Christ be whole within man only, or else His body and blood be also externally seated in the very consecrated elements themselves. . . . All things considered and compared with that success which truth hath hitherto had by so bitter conflicts with errors in this point, shall I wish that men would more give themselves to meditate with silence what we have by the sacrament, and less to dispute of the manner how? ”<sup>1</sup> These wise and weighty words might very well apply *mutatis mutandis* to the same problem as it confronts us at the present hour, the problem of reconciling convictions which are apparently in hopeless conflict as to the meaning to be attributed to our Lord’s words: “This is my body”; “this is my blood.”

Further, let me ask my former co-religionists always to keep before their minds the fact that this is a vital subject with Catholics, Anglican or other. There can be no reunion which would tend to weaken in any wise their firm belief in the primacy of this question over all else. The very reason why they take up so strong a position about the validity of orders is because they cannot run the risk of compromising anything that would endanger the doctrine of the Real Presence. This is for them fundamental. They must safeguard the altar and all that the name

<sup>1</sup> *Ecc. Pol.*, Book V. cap. lxvii.



implies. Is it impossible for Nonconformists to meet them on this ground and give full respect to a conviction which has shown itself to have so much spiritual value? Surely not. It has been well said that men are usually right in what they affirm and wrong in what they deny. To affirm the validity of Nonconformist orders, for what they have always claimed to be, is not necessarily to deny that Anglo-Catholics may be right in what they say about the necessity of making sure that only a validly ordained priesthood should be allowed to consecrate the sacred elements. To admit a counter principle would be to run the risk of profaning the most solemn of all mysteries, or at any rate to weaken its significance. Is it too much to ask that Nonconformists should recognise this and act accordingly? Do they give anything away by so doing? I would point out that there are thousands of clergy in the ranks of Anglicanism to-day who take what is ordinarily understood to be the Nonconformist attitude on the point at issue, but that does not prevent them from fulfilling all the requirements of their sacramentalist brethren, not only in the matter of ordination, but in the strict observance of ancient Catholic practice in the manner of administering the Holy Communion. Is it quite beyond the bounds of probability that Nonconformist ministers as a whole should ultimately be persuaded



to do the same? Remember what is at stake : it is nothing less than the bringing together into one fold all the scattered portions of Christ's flock. And on no other conditions is it possible.

This brings us back to the point of episcopacy. It is absolutely requisite that the historic episcopate should be accepted by all the non-episcopal bodies, or formal unity we cannot have. The historic episcopate represents the framework of Catholic solidarity, and the sign, symbol, and guarantee of the unbroken succession of the ordinary as distinguished from the extraordinary ministry of the Christian Church. It is this ordinary ministry which is associated specifically with the altar, or rather the presbyteral order is so associated. The very idea of the altar in its Christian use may legitimately be said thus to depend upon the fact of the historic episcopate; the one implies the other. Just as the sacraments imply the visible Church, so does the altar imply the Bishop who provides for its maintenance. The advantages of episcopal government as such we need not dwell upon; there are many Nonconformists who would admit them without going any farther. But episcopacy as a method of government is not sufficient; it is episcopacy as witnessing for an uninterrupted apostolic stream of life and power that is in question, an outward as well as an inward sequence of spiritual fact and function.

The American Methodist episcopate would not do as fulfilling this condition, for it is not and does not profess to be the lineal descendant of the episcopate of the undivided Church. I am arguing nothing as to the divine origin of the episcopacy. I take my stand only upon the practical ground that from sub-apostolic times onward till the Reformation the episcopate was an outstanding fact, a fact which cannot be assigned to a second place, in the fabric of the Church. All that we now associate with its spiritual functions was generally admitted during that long period. It was through the episcopate and not otherwise that the continuous identity of the Church and its ministry was maintained.

For the purpose of my present appeal it is unnecessary to inquire whether presbyter and bishop were originally the same person or not. That does not matter. What does matter is that by ancient and general consent the episcopate as an order distinct from the presbyterate has been the means by which the presbyterate itself, and with it the whole sacramental system of the Catholic Church, has been supplied and regulated from age to age. How can any real unity be thought of which does not involve coming within the orbit and operation of this venerable existing actuality? The historic episcopate is here; it has not to be re-discovered; it is the obvious mould in which the Catholic

unity of the future can be achieved. Personally I think it unlikely that the Church was ever any other than episcopally governed, somewhat in the modern sense, even in apostolic times. No local church could be efficiently administered by a committee of presbyters then any more than now; and there would not be more than one local church in any given city or district, even though there might be more than one congregation. What more probable than that every church—that is, every diocese in embryo—should have had its presiding elder from the first whose authority came to him direct from the apostolate? But as I cannot prove this I will not rest my case upon it. All I submit is that in the wisdom of the Church, guided as we must believe by the Holy Spirit promised to that very end, the historic episcopate came into existence so early, has continued so long, and is bound up with so much that is vital to the best interests of the Christian religion, that it cannot be dispensed with now or in the time to come. If we are to get together at all we must get together upon that basis.

This at once raises the thorny issue of re-ordination. Ought it to be required? Will Nonconformists ever consent to it? And I answer that that depends upon how much we are in earnest in the desire to unite. If we feel that unity is of more importance than the

question of the present status of ministers not episcopally ordained we shall find a way through it, otherwise we shall not. Let it be remembered, I again venture to insist, that the question is not one of the validity of Nonconformist orders. The validity of Nonconformist orders, in the sense explained above as understood by Nonconformists themselves, may be freely admitted and ought to be admitted by Anglicans of every shade without endangering any principle. Will Nonconformists in their turn admit that the question of the service of the altar is also of vital import for others at least? If we can get as far as that we may get farther very soon. We are not committed, as is so often supposed, to the logical opposite of any affirmation. For a Catholic to affirm the doctrine of the Real Presence in the objective sense as depending upon the valid act of consecration by an episcopally ordained priest it is not necessary to deny that the Protestant may experience the same Real Presence in other ways. For a Protestant to affirm the Real Presence of Christ in the heart of the believer it is not necessary to deny that Christ may come to the Catholic along the line of his expectations; indeed if there be one certitude in life it is that He does so come, and it would be strange if He did not. Christ is not restricted even to His own ordinances in imparting His grace to the soul of the believer.

But that is no reason why we should make light of modes of approach to the most holy mystery of the communion of His body and blood which have been sanctified by time and Catholic usage as well as by the reverent devotion of untold millions of His people. Nothing is lost and much may be gained by complying with that which is long established whether we can agree that it is of divine institution or not. A seaman can sail up the Firth of Clyde outside the course which experienced mariners have charted for him. He may be quite safe in doing so, but he would be no less safe if he stayed within the bounds so marked. Would Nonconformists be any worse for doing as evangelical Churchmen do in conforming so far to ancient Catholic belief and practice as would satisfy earnest and devout High Churchmen? Perhaps Tillotson's proposal for overcoming the scruples of both parties may yet prove of value, notwithstanding the many years that have elapsed since it was first put forward and rejected in the seventeenth century. May not Nonconformist ministers in a body, by solemn resolution and with utmost dignity and charity, consent to the reaffirmation of their calling by the imposition of a Bishop's hands, stating at the same time that they do not and cannot recognise that their ministry hitherto was not of Christ's ordinance? And may not the authoritative guides of the

Church of England see their way in a like spirit to permit such reordination with the use, as Tillotson suggested, of some such preliminary formula as, "If thou art not already ordained," etc.? I admit that the circumstances were somewhat different in the cases with which Tillotson was prepared to deal, but the principle is the same. This would regularise the position for the Catholic, and would not invalidate it for the Protestant.

The thought may suggest itself to the reader that an arrangement of this kind would simply mean that Anglicanism would swallow Nonconformity whole, obliterating all its distinctive features and suppressing much that has been precious and blessed to generations of devout and earnest people. What, for example, would become of free prayer? Would all public services have to run in the mould of the Anglican liturgy, revised or unrevised? What of the freedom of initiative so long enjoyed by individual churches and their ministers; in future would these have to wait for a Bishop's faculty without being allowed to proceed on their own lines? Would people who like a plain and simple service have to forego their preference in favour of set forms for which they have a natural dislike? What of organisation, rule, method, local church government and institutions? What of denominational procedure, colleges, endow-



ments, and the thousand and one traditions and customs that make the character of each denomination as distinct from all others? There are more knotty problems even than these, and, as I have more than once observed to my Anglican *confrères*, all would not be plain sailing by any means if Nonconformists in a body became reunited with the mother Church. There would be differences of spirit and temper and general outlook to be composed, difficulties of habit and practice to be surmounted, prejudices and antagonisms to be done away, all calling for patience, large-mindedness, and practical wisdom such as ecclesiastical statesmanship seldom possesses and is not able to presuppose in the constituencies with which it is concerned.

These are matters which cannot be ignored or glossed over, and I am far from wishing to pretend that they would not exist. But let it be said emphatically that they have no necessary connection with Nonconformist acceptance of the historic episcopate in the manner above indicated. It does not follow that episcopal government of the Church must always proceed on its present lines; we need at once more flexibility and more coherence in our methods. Someone has called the Church of England the worst governed institution in the world, and perhaps he is not far wrong. To say that it is full of anomalies is only to say that it is characteristically English.

But let me tell my Nonconformist brethren this : there is more individual freedom even now within the Church of England than in any Nonconformist denomination of my acquaintance, both for laity and clergy. The incumbent of a parish has too much freedom in my judgment as compared with his Bishop, and I for one would be glad to see the powers of the Bishop greatly increased. No one seems to be sure how much he may do and how much he may not do; in fact no one seems to be sure about anything. There is the greatest variety in practice and the widest divergence in opinion. We are breaking the letter of the law all the time in one direction or another. Oh, believe me, my co-religionists of old, you would have plenty of elbow-room for your little idiosyncracies in the Church of England as at present constituted. It is nothing like so well organised and directed as the established Church of Scotland or the United Free Church of that country; the Presbyterian polity in its actual working has many advantages over episcopacy as the last three centuries have made us familiar with the latter in England. It would be a great gain for us, or so I think, if something could be done to define more exactly the position of the Bishops in relation to their clergy, and both to the laity; but I should be very loth indeed to see anomalies removed, and consistency and

efficiency established, at the cost of any limitation of the freedom and comprehensiveness which are the peculiar inheritance of the Church of England. No Nonconformist body would think of permitting the deviations from accepted standards, the aberrations from type, which the Church of England permits. They could not afford to do it; and besides, being smaller, their membership tends to approximate to one well-understood tone and style, whatever that may happen to be in each particular denomination.

The repeated compromises of the Reformation period are no doubt responsible for the ill-regulated condition of things which exists in the Church of England to-day, and reform is badly wanted. May it be that the Nonconformists will ultimately help in achieving it? They need not be afraid of episcopacy *per se*. Episcopacy might be a modified Presbyterianism—indeed has been more than once in our rough island story, and practically is in America at this moment. Did not Thomas Cartwright and his friends in Elizabethan times succeed in introducing Presbyterianism under episcopal forms in not a few dioceses till the law interfered and put a stop to it? It was the State, not the Church, that disappointed that Puritan programme, though I am not sorry the idea failed. The moral is that a reunited, all-comprehending Church of God in this realm of England could make of

episcopacy exactly what it pleased. If it chose to make it stronger it could do so; if it preferred to see it modified by the introduction of an advisory council or otherwise, representing clergy and laity in each diocese, it could do so. There is nothing, so far as I know, either in doctrinal principle or historical precedent to forbid it. The one thing essential is that the Bishop should always ordain. Let that be conceded and all the rest is open to arrangement. It does not seem to be generally known by Non-conformists that it is not the Bishop *only* who lays his hands upon the head of the man who receives priest's orders; Bishop and priests co-operate in this solemn act, a clear recognition of the fact that apostolic succession is the succession of the priesthood.

In mediæval usage there was a variety of local custom and worship almost equalling that of Christendom at the present day. The one great difference between then and now was that the Church was one and consciously felt to be such in all countries, the great international bond. Hildebrand's failure, the most magnificent failure in history as it has been rightly called, to establish the City of God upon earth, with all the secular powers in immediate subjection to the Holy See, was the failure of a great conception; perhaps the breakdown prepared the way for a greater and more spiritual

vision of the same ideal. As an international force Christianity is to-day, outwardly at least, in a humiliating position. Would to God it could win back to the New Testament idea of a world-wide holy nation, a nation whose patriotism is not of this world, but to whom is committed the sublime task of turning the kingdoms of this world into the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ. To that end we need insist upon no rigid uniformity in our reunited English Church. All the elasticity of method which prevails in Nonconformity now could continue to prevail as in the English Church of six or seven hundred years ago. The tolerance of the mediæval Church even to vagaries of opinion was truly amazing; it was only when unity began to be threatened that persecution assumed portentous proportions, to the lasting disgrace of ecclesiasticism, though it would be a mistake and an injustice to imagine that ecclesiastics alone were responsible for it. It was public opinion that made persecution, and when public opinion ceased to require it, it was abandoned.

It may further be remarked that the only unity which the foregoing observations contemplate is Protestant unity, and yet I have called the Church of England Catholic. There is no inconsistency. I advocate Protestant unity as the way to a greater unity still. No unity which excludes Rome or which Rome excludes can

rightly be regarded as ultimately satisfactory. There is nothing sacrosanct about the word Protestant. All Protestants profess to be Catholic in what they hold to be the truer meaning of the term, Catholic in a sense against which they believe Rome to have offended, Catholic as the primitive Church was Catholic. In this they may be right or they may be wrong, but the fact remains that Protestantism is in substance a protest in favour of a catholicity which cannot be realised in its fulness without eventual corporate reunion. From this point of view we need have no hesitation in declaring the Church of England Protestant, and she is Protestant (as I hold) in a better sense than those churches which have not retained the historic episcopate, for her protest against papalism is a protest which is all the stronger for being made by a church which has preserved its historic fabric unchanged and maintained its Catholic tradition unimpaired. The war is bringing us into closer touch with the great Catholic Eastern Church, or, to speak more accurately, with the several communions comprising it; and it now remains to be seen whether a reunited British Christianity—including, as in the end it must, Protestant Christianity throughout the English-speaking world on a Catholic basis—may not be able to effect intercommunion with a Church as primitive as Rome can claim to be



and the validity of whose orders Rome does not call in question. As regards Anglican orders I would remind those who read these pages that Rome has not committed herself to an irrevocable declaration on the subject. The decree declining to admit their authenticity as proven was very carefully as well as cleverly drawn when the matter came up afresh for consideration a few years back, and it may be taken as certain that the issue is not foreclosed even by the Vatican. This may seem a point hardly worth making, but no point is too small to be taken into account that is essential to a final settlement of the cause in dispute between Anglicanism and Rome, any more than between Anglicanism and Nonconformity. Is it presumptuous to suggest that perhaps the same way out of the deadlock may ultimately have to be found? May the English priesthood one day be called upon to consider the advisability of doing in its turn, for the sake of a larger Christian unity, what I have had the boldness to ask the Nonconformist ministry to do for the sake of healing our divisions here at home? I dare do no more than hint at the thought and leave it to germinate.

From the window where I sit writing these last few sentences of a book which is at once a personal explanation and an eirenicon I look out upon a fair landscape just beginning to be touched by the chilly hand of autumn. It is a

dreary day. Great, gloomy masses of cloud obscure the whole face of the heaven; in the far distance it is raining hard, and will be raining here again presently. There is thunder in the air, and the leaden atmosphere presses heavily on my brain. Angry gusts of wind whirl the fallen leaves along the garden paths; the flowers droop, the borders within which they grow are ragged and untidy; there is a musty green on brick walls and gravel walks. Beyond lie sodden fields wherein a few sheep try in vain to find a dry spot for shelter. I know what this all means. Winter is coming, dark and cold, and presently there will be no flowers, no gleams of sunshine, no sign of life or colour where I have so long been accustomed to look for both. Nevertheless I remember, and the knowledge brings comfort, that a horticulturalist once told me to look not to April but to October for the spring-time of the year. Underneath all the death and decay the new life is already preparing its advent. Within those falling petals yonder are the ripened seeds of next year's summer glory. Pinch those diminutive husks, so like mummy cases, that are pushing the fading leaves off the trees, and you will find within, beautifully folded, delicately perfect, the buds that are to be. Nature sleeps, but she is not idle; the miracle of regeneration is going on all the time unhindered, unresting, unexhausted,

with the infinitude of God behind it. We wait in hope—nay, in confidence—that brightness, wealth, and splendour will come again with azure skies and the singing of birds.

Will it be otherwise with the spiritual welfare of the race? To-day our dreams of universal brotherhood have been brought to nought, our expectations of an international order based upon amity and good-will are drowned in a torrent of blood. The wail of the wronged and stricken rises without intermission to the heaven we have neglected and despised in the hour of our prosperity and pride. “Many there be that say, who will show us any good?” “Hath God forgotten to be gracious?” Famine, murder, bestiality, and unfaith stalk hand in hand. Is religion perishing from the earth; is the Church dumb and dead as the false conception of material well-being that this storm of hate and all other evil passion has swept away? Let no one believe it. “The doors of night may be the gates of light.” The old is being destroyed that the new may be born, the false is passing that the true may come into possession of its inheritance. The things which cannot be shaken stand. Let us wait, and hope, and pray; let us draw near together in love that the God who fulfils Himself in many ways may cause His word to spring up and grow in the hearts of men once more and bring forth fruit to His honour

and glory. May the Church in all lands be ready for the new and fuller advent of our divine Master who gave Himself for it "that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

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